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MUSIC AND MANNERS

Personal Reminiscences and Sketches of Character

BY

W. BEATTY-KINGSTON

COMMANDER OF THE IMPERIAL ORDER OF THE MEDJIDIEH AND OF THE ROYAL ORDERS OF THE REDEEMER, STAR OF ROUMANIA, CROWN OF ROUMANIA AND TAKOVA OF SERVIA; KNIGHT OF THE IMPERIAL ORDER OF FRANCIS JOSEPH AND OF THE I.R. AUSTRIAN ORDER OF MERIT OF THE FIRST CLASS WITH THE CROWN, ETC., ETC.

AUTHOR OF "WILLIAM I., GERMAN EMPEROR," "THE BATTLE OF BERLIN," ETC.

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CONTENTS.

VOL. II.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

VIENNESE HOSPITALITY.—AMUSEMENTS IN THE KAISERSTADT.—THE WÜRSTL PRATER.—AUSTRIAN RACING AND DINING.—SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENTS.—CARNIVAL EXTRAVAGANCES.—A FESTIVAL OF FOOLS 1

CHAPTER II.

LIFE IN BERLIN 43

CHAPTER III.

LIFE IN BERLIN.—UNDER THE LINDEN.—PRUSSIAN ORDERS OF CHIVALRY.—GERMAN PATRONYMICS AND PREDICATES . . 68

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE IN BERLIN.—EASTER AND CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS.—SUMMER AMUSEMENTS.—PRESS PHENOMENA.—SLEDGING . . . 104

CHAPTER V.

SPANISH CHARACTERISTICS.—A MADRID TELEGRAPH-OFFICE.—SHERRY TOWN.—LIFE IN ANDALUSIA.—A FRUIT MARKET . 149

CHAPTER VI.

LIFE IN BUCHAREST 182

CHAPTER VII.

LIFE IN BELGRADE 213

1446902

CHAPTER VIII.

PAGE
SERVIAN PRINCES AND THE TRAGEDY OF TOPCHIDEREH . . 235

CHAPTER IX.

LIFE IN CAIRO.—ARAB CHARACTERISTICS.—HELIOPOLIS . . . 252

CHAPTER X.

THE HOME OF AN ITALIAN ACTOR.—FIVE ITALIAN DOGS . . 275

CHAPTER XI.

ENGLISHMEN ABROAD.—FOREIGN COOKERY AND BRITISH REQUIREMENTS.—UNFREQUENTED CONTINENTAL NOOKS.—SPAS AND "WATER-PLAYS."—A DULL CAPITAL 303

CHAPTER XII.

STATES OF SIEGE 345

MUSIC AND MANNERS.

CHAPTER I.

VIENNESE HOSPITALITY. — AMUSEMENTS IN THE KAISERSTADT.—THE WÜRSTL PRATER.—AUSTRIAN RACING AND DINING.—SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENTS.—CARNIVAL EXTRAVAGANCES.—A FESTIVAL OF FOOLS.

Vienna has the reputation of being a city in which the savage virtue of hospitality is universally practised. It is supposed to be a sort of foreigners' paradise—a happy oasis in the great Continental desert, where the parched traveller, thirsting for social delights, can refresh himself with copious draughts of Gemüthlichkeit *à discretion.* I am totally at a loss to understand upon what grounds this agreeable fiction is based. A more civil, smiling, superficially cordial people than the Viennese does not exist upon the face of Europe: French *politesse*, Italian demonstrativeness, Spanish courtesy, all have their charms —alas! too fleeting—and are genuine of their sort; but the downright geniality of the Kaiserstadt in small matters, whilst surpassing all these in attractiveness, is a magnificent sham, artistically concealing an ingrained selfishness and absolute indifference to social obligations

about as engrossing and intense as may be. Comparing Vienna with other Continental capitals justly renowned for their inhospitality, I am forced to admit that she is as churlish as the worst of them, and a good deal less honest in her churlishness. Let us take Florence, for instance. It is beyond dispute that you may reside in that *poco-curante* city for a dozen years, move in the best society, keep open house, and even achieve the position of a universal favourite, without ever being asked to dinner by one of the numerous friends who partake of your good cheer with affectionate regularity—without penetrating an inch farther into the inner life, the *vie intime*, of your most frequent visitor than you did on the day of his first visit. He calls you "thou," speaks of you as "carino," even "poverino"—if he is really fond of you—displays a delicate ingenuity in rendering you a thousand little useless services—and, in proportion to the verity of his regard for you, will lend an eager hand to the dissection of your moral character, or to the dissemination amongst your other "friends" of a scandalous rumour affecting your solvency, the virtue of your wife, or the reputation of your daughter. A society like that of Florence is hospitable neither in deed nor in thought; but at least it does not pretend to be so; or, indeed, to be anything in particular, save amusing, free and easy—in morals, not manners—for nowhere are the outward forms of decorum more scrupulously adhered to than in Florence. Firenze la Bella is frankly selfish, unreservedly cynical, and "has the courage of its convictions;" whereas the upper and middle classes of Vienna lay claim to all sorts of old-fashioned virtues to them verily unknown,

save by name; amongst others hospitality. They lose no opportunity of impressing the foreigner with the fact that the Kaiserstadt is the only birthplace and home of that renowned quality Gemüthlichkeit, variously translated, Facility for Receiving Pleasure, Jollity, Strauss's Waltzes, Beer, Smoke, Hot Rooms—choose which rendering you please; they are all equally correct, and none of them to be found in the dictionary. They insist upon your believing in this delusive nondescript so loudly and persistently that you soon begin to doubt its existence, and presently discover that they themselves have no knowledge of it whatever in its concrete conditions, if it have any. For I do not dispute that one man may fancy he finds Gemüthlichkeit at the bottom of a huge glass mug filled with Pilsener or Schellenhofer; that another may detect it in the thrilling harmonies of a stringed quartet; or that a third may inhale it from a Government Regalia Media. Gemüthlichkeit, if it be anything at all, is some one particular thing to each individual person—*e.g.*, ham and eggs to A, a shower bath to B, the worst of a political argument to C, a racy *couplet* from a raddled matron in a beer-house to D, a quiet rubber at the club, ducat points, ten for consolation, and *sans atouts* once in four, to E, and so on all through the alphabet; but I contend that it is not universal—not even generic; and, above all, that it is by no means Viennese. For a slower set of people, or one more thoroughly suffocated by routine even in their pleasures, such as they are, it would be difficult to imagine. I will endeavour to describe and analyse their amusements; but first let us examine and weigh the merits of their claims to be a

hospitable people; afterwards we will briefly inspect their titles to Gemüthlichkeit.

What *is* society in Vienna? I am seriously embarrassed to say what it is, or rather what they are—for, of course, in a town so full of class feeling as the Kaiserstadt, social relations are absolutely limited and defined by the unwritten statutes of caste. There is the Burg, to begin with, in which the Imperial Court holds sparse and mild festivity, setting an excellent example, remnant of the patriarchal days, to less exalted party-givers in the matter of early hours. "Come at six and go at nine," is understood in the august invitations. Very few of these *soirées*—generally enlivened by musical performances, vocal and instrumental—are given, which is a pity; for the Emperor and Empress are unrivalled as host and hostess, and exert themselves indefatigably to amuse their guests. But how many guests? And what must you be and do to become one of the forty or fifty chosen, who are honoured by invitations? First of all, if not a foreigner, you must be "Hof-fähig vom Geburt" (court-eligible by birth), that is to say, must prove your right to not less than sixteen quarterings in your coat, and that your paternal and maternal descent has been noble for so many generations without a plebeian hiatus. There be princes of the Empire who never get asked—compliance with these regulations being out of their power; recently ennobled manufacturers, capitalists, men of science can never hope that their names should be inserted on the Imperial list of *invités*. Supposing you are "Hof-fähig," so much the better, perhaps, for you; but you must also be in favour with the Imperial family

to get a card for these exclusive receptions. Politics have nothing to do with the parties at the Burg. Ministers and ambassadors are not always asked, whilst a few patricians, not remarkable for great wealth, prominent career, or any quality known to the uninitiate, are always sure of a "command." There are strange contradictions in the Austrian Court code, as democratic in some respects as it is aristocratic in others. For instance, the Emperor grants audience to persons of all degrees twice a week; it is less difficult to be admitted to his Majesty's presence than to that of a chief clerk in a Government office. But being a knight of the Imperial orders does not entitle any one to an invitation to the palace, which is, with some exceptions, granted to a man rather as the representative of his ancestors than as himself. Therefore society at Court is maintained upon a very small scale indeed, *pour cause*. The class of society immediately succeeding that gathered round the Emperor and the archdukes may be summed up in a very few words. It consists of the "Hof-fähig" people—who visit and receive one another, and nobody else. They affect greater exclusiveness, if possible, than that ordained by Court traditions; for, after all, the Ministers of State and representatives of foreign Powers have the *entrée*, *virtute officiorum*, to the Imperial saloons, whereas I could name one or two drawing-rooms in which statesmen and diplomatists, unless scions of certain families, never set foot.

Next come the embassies. Now, the embassies, *exceptis excipendis*, are very hospitable, as it is their duty to be. The more familiar one becomes with diplomacy, and how it is done; its requirements, uses, and effects; the qualifi-

cations and achievements of those holding its most important trusts, etc., the more one wonders what an ambassador's real functions are, if not to represent the hospitality of his native land—why such cumbrous and costly establishments as embassies, legations, and the like are kept up, if not to impress foreigners with a deep respect for the wealth and magnificence of the countries they represent; perhaps, also, to keep travelling natives of those countries up to the mark in the manners and customs of their respective fatherlands. Diplomatists *en mission* are very handsomely paid for very little work; but clearly under the tacit compact that they should spend their country's money in a manner calculated to raise foreign estimation of that country's dignity. This end is most easily and agreeably attained by a judicious, yet large, hospitality; and some of the embassies in Vienna understand their calling well enough; but their free and frequent welcome to hundreds of notabilities can scarcely be characterised as illustrating Viennese hospitality. Ambassadors, if they know their business, are hospitable everywhere; not particularly in Vienna—indeed, rather less so in that capital than in others with which I am acquainted. Giving a certain number of parties during the season is, no doubt, a troublesome duty; but then it is about the only one interfering with the calm and comfortable indolence in which the life of a Foreign Envoy is passed.

Following close in the wake of diplomacy comes the local official world, by which I mean the actual Cabinet Ministers and the Speakers of the two Houses. There is no "Prefect of the Danube," and the Municipality, though it attends parties when invited, gives none. The

Ministers, much to their credit, are, as a rule, far too busy to indulge extravagantly in the amenities of social life; they open their saloons about once a month, go through a heavy ordeal of *banalités* with great good humour, and return to their conferences, manifestoes, and reports with unwearied industry. Now and then they snatch a few moments from their graver avocations to make the round of a public ball-room, where they chat unaffectedly with the most pleasant persons they can find —generally artists, musicians, and actors—and are exhaustively stared at by legions of *gobemouches*. Intelligent, conscientious, earnest, and overworked they certainly are; but hospitable they certainly are not; for the best of reasons—they can't be.

And yet with these meritorious and kindly gentlemen I must conclude my list of those who, at least, make something like a show of hospitality in Vienna. The officials of lower rank, the high military officers, the rich bankers and merchants, the wealthy professional men, even the leading tradesmen, members of a Bürgerschaft supposed to be eminently Gemüthlich, no more form a society or societies, or have any tendency or desire to be hospitable than so many tribes of Caribees, or beaver settlements. Every Caribee for himself. No respectable beaver wants a *pied à terre* in his fellow-beaver's lodge. The ladies, poor things, subdued by centuries of male selfishness, male devotion to beer-house, and general male letting-alone of wives and daughters, have not even spirit enough to get up tea-fights amongst themselves, and revile their forsakers under the mawkish stimulus of muffins. The men go straight from their "depart-

ments," offices, quarters, or counters to the club or the Bier-halle—the Verein or the Kneipe—where they eat, drink, smoke, play Tarok, and talk about nothing till bedtime, when they go home to sleep—that is, if they are good. If they are naughty—and a good many of them are—they adjourn to a cheap public ball, suburban "hop," or beershop *chantant*, whence they return, if they do return, somewhere in the small hours, decidedly no better off, morally or physically, than when they left home in the early morn. Meanwhile the ladies—well! I don't know what they do exactly—a good deal of needlework and revision of household accounts, I suppose—put the children to bed, and look, for the thousandth time, over the photograph albums. The standard of female education in the middle classes is not very high, and so it is to be hoped they do not suffer so grievously from *ennui* as they assuredly would if it were. Well-bred and highly-cultivated women, left utterly to themselves, are apt to turn melancholy or desperate; it is some consolation to think that the Vienna ladies run little risk of becoming either the one or the other, though they are more thoroughly neglected, as a rule, than the ladies of other capitals—even in Germany. But even they, sad as is their lot, enjoy rare moments of social glory—isolated compensations for the weariful dulness of their daily lives. During the short reign of Carnival about a dozen public balls are given in favour of charitable institutions, or by the committees of local associations, admission to which is procurable by the payment of more or fewer florins, as the case may be. To these the otherwise recalcitrant papas and husbands conduct

their "femalities;" and the meek domestic chrysalides burst into butterfly raiment for a few hours, flutter their wings vigorously, gyrate after the manner of everyday butterflies, and then relapse into the egg-laying and spinning state for another dreary series of months. I grant that these balls are good balls; but the pleasure they afford, being purchasable, is not really social. I grant that, besides them, there are masked balls galore; Tanzkränzchen, on the "gentlemen pay for the ladies" principle, in abundance; plenty of concerts as good as can be; half a dozen theatres, of which two are endurable —Strauss at the Blumensaal, and the Würtemberg band at the Volksgarten. But, granting all this and a power of suburban high jinks to boot, dirt cheap and triumphantly nasty, where, where is the society—the Vienna society—of which every Viennese is apt to boast to the stranger within his gates?

Well, if they haven't got much society in Vienna, at least they have (so they say) enough and to spare of Gemüthlichkeit. Perhaps they have. I only wish they could define and point it out. What, then, is Viennese Gemüthlichkeit? I admit that the beer is sublime, supernacular—it is, indeed! And the rendering of instrumental music is not to be surpassed, scarcely equalled, in London, Paris, or Berlin. But, beyond these and a few other very good things, in what can a Dweller on the Threshold discover the longed-for Gemüthlichkeit? Not, surely, in the dismal theatres, or in the murky Bierhalle, with their fetid atmosphere, vengeful vivers, and unclean songs? Or in the narrow streets, to adventure which is as perilous as the imminent deadly breach? Or

in the rickety omnibuses, which need only a steward and a battery of basins to paraphrase the discomforts of a Channel steamer to perfection? Or in the foul-mouthed cabmen, who bespatter you with invectives if you pay them only twice their fare? Or in the poverty, ignorance, and vice eating the very heart out of public morality? The Viennese, in common with many other German tribes, vow and declare that we Englishmen do not, and cannot, understand the word, or the state of things and feelings it expresses. All I can say is, that, if Gemüthlichkeit be the thing that I have been forced to think the Viennese believe it to be, I am sincerely thankful that it *is* untranslatable into our imperfect language, and, still more so, that I *don't* understand it, nor ever shall!

The Parisians enjoy the reputation of being the most ardent and assiduous pleasure-lovers in Europe. The theory in virtue of which this enviable renown is pretty universally conferred upon them is based upon very sufficient grounds. Unquestionably Paris offers a greater number and variety of amusements to its inhabitants than any other city in the world; and it is reasonable to infer from this fact that those inhabitants take a greater delight in recreation than the natives of towns less abundantly provided with the means of killing time agreeably. It must not, however, be forgotten that Paris, that brilliant epitome of the age we live in, is, in fact, a gigantic Vanity Fair, whither flock the rich and idle of every country, certain of finding there the amusement that is to them an absolute necessity; and to which the hard-workers also joyfully resort in seasons of well-earned holiday, to achieve, during an interval of

well-organised *désœuvrement*, the recuperation of their exhausted forces. The numerous enterprises that provide for the Lutetian public daily and nightly that enormous bill of fare in the way of pastime which is admired and envied by London, Vienna, Berlin, and St. Petersburg, derive their prosperity chiefly from foreigners and provincials—the Parisians themselves have, from generation to generation, eaten so largely of the Forbidden Fruit that they are rather used up so far as diversions, theatrical, terpsichorean, or extra-mural, are concerned, and retain a passionate fondness for such spectacles only as take the form of military display, to which no Frenchman, however *blasé* or cynical, is wholly indifferent. Go to Parisian theatres, *jardins dansants*, casinos, concert-rooms, or race-courses, and you shall find all those places of entertainment thronged by foreigners and provincials: the genuine Parisian is conspicuous by his absence. Moreover, the *bourgeoisie* of Paris is a busy, money-getting class, earnestly devoted to its manifold occupations. There are few cities in which more or harder work is got through in the course of the year, and with less surcease of application. Whereas in Vienna the great mass of the people, from the shopkeeper downwards, live in a happy-go-lucky sort of way, working a little when they cannot help it, trusting a great deal to "something turning up," and devoting the whole of the limited amount of energy with which nature has endowed them to the pursuit of pleasure when and wherever they can find it. I must, therefore, take leave to claim for the Kaiserstadt the privilege, if it be one, of being inhabited

by a race of people which is, in every respect, far more passionately pleasure-loving than are the Parisians. I am thoroughly confident that, man for man, the Viennese spend twice as much money yearly in amusements, although the recreations available to them are but few and strangely deficient in variety, as do the denizens of the splendid city on the Seine. Pleasure may almost be asserted to be their main occupation; all the rest is *Nebensache*, something either subservient or contributing to the one prime object. "Nur tanzen und singen und alleweil fidel;" the refrain put into the mouth of Priam's pet son by Jacques Offenbach might serve aptly for Vienna's motto. It is *au jour le jour* with the Viennese. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we" —may have to work! For this dangerous epicureanism, which is at the root of half of the evils that stand in the way of the Kaiserstadt's moral and material advancement, the old *régime* is, no doubt, principally responsible. It systematically taught the people that their mission in life was to drink good and cheap beer, listen to admirable dance-music surpassingly well executed, pay the taxes (neither heavy nor harshly levied) when they could, venerate the Imperial family, crowd the theatres and churches, and leave the management of their affairs, political, financial, and educational, to the gifted and privileged race which, somehow or other, in its supreme wisdom and benevolence, Providence had created for that special purpose and set over them in authority. "Kick up your heels," said a paternal Government, "as much as you please—you can't kick them too high; but don't attempt to make any use of your brains, for that

is an absurd proceeding in people of your position, and one directly at variance with the Divine decrees, which ordain that we, and we only, are capable of regulating the national welfare!" And straightway the Government contracted a ruinous loan, entered upon a calamitous war, lost a province or two, or placed a hundred thousand or so families in mourning, never forgetting to call upon the people, ignorant perforce, and besotted in a compulsory sensualism, to pay the bill, and thank God for being blessed with such frugal and sagacious rulers. All of a sudden, after generations and generations of this organised degradation had lowered the morality and utterly destroyed the independence of character of a kindly and intelligent race, came a tremendous cataclysm, upsetting old traditions, uprooting ancient landmarks, and imperiously summoning a people steeped in the lethargy of ages to arise, set its own house in order, and take upon itself the whole responsibility to which it had for ever so many centuries been absolutely forbidden even to aspire! Like Minerva issuing from the head of the Thunderer, it must be armed at all points, and perfectly wise, at a moment's notice. But Pallas was the result of a miracle—and the days of miracles are past and gone.

As might have been expected, the Viennese has by no means come up to the imaginary standard of political capability which has been set up for him by the apostles of Reform, and the enthusiasts who have been dinning the blessings of self-government into his indifferent ears for the last twenty years. Accustomed to find everything, even to his opinions, cut and dried for him, he is

altogether unmoved by the glorious prospect of having everything to do for himself. He is, in all matters outside his immediate personal gratification, as apathetic as a Russian moujik or a Turkish collector of taxes. Only when the time-honoured kicking-up-of-heels aforesaid, which is become a part of his nature, comes into question does he develop a remarkable energy of purpose, fertility of suggestion, and elasticity of temperament. Call upon him to exercise any of his elective or inspectorial functions for the manifest advantage of his parish or his city, and he will, with a cheery but somewhat vacant laugh, answer, "Es wird schon gut gehen!" (That'll be all right enough), or "S'werden's halt ohne mir auch richten können!" (They will get on well enough without me!) He will growl like a fretful bear over the ineptitude of some asinine town councillor, a living skid for the wheel of municipal progress; but he will not take the trouble of attending the civic elections, so that the blockhead he complains of may be ousted, and replaced by a man of sense. As a grumbler—always, however, in a good-natured silly sort of way—he is unrivalled, but deems that, when he has uttered his unmeaning protestations a few scores of times to his cronies, who are all fashioned on his pattern, he has done his share of the public work. It is with his rooted dislike to intellectual effort, and his utter deafness to the appeals of duty, that the Government has to wage a constant and harassing war. But whisper in his ear the magic words "A'Juchs," or, still welcomer, "A'Hetz," and he will brighten up into a liveliness, an activity absolutely astonishing. To be briskly boiled alive in the stifling

atmosphere of a crowded ball-room, or slowly stewed to a pulp in a reeking beer-hall, he will make any sacrifice of remunerative employment or of domestic comfort. He will gaily mortgage his future earnings that he may be able to participate in the monotonous joys of Carnival. No sooner has winter shown signs of flagging in its bitterness than he is all agog to get outside the barriers, and swill his beer voluptuously *im Freien*—in the open. For him, with the first hesitating breath of spring, are polished up and thrown open the countless *Restaurationen*, *Wein-schenke*, and *Bier-gärten* that line each country road and fill every village in the neighbourhood of the capital. Whether it be a holiday or not —and, counting Sundays, there are about ninety days of prescribed idleness in the Austrian yearly calender— so soon as the sun makes up his mind to shine out merrily one fine morning, though cold the breeze from the still snow-clad hills and muddy the roads from recent rains, out from the several *Linien* pour long streams of citizens and proletaries, the former in *fiakers*, "comfortäbel"—so named on the *lucus a non* principle —omnibuses, and horse-cars, the latter on that humble and inexpensive but enduring animal, "Shanks' mare." Speedily are all the tiny tiddlywinks and spacious beer-gardens filled to overflowing with consumers of "Heuriger" (the sweet and fiery produce of last autumn's vintage) and "Märzer," "Klein Schwechater" or "Schellenhofer." Never mind that there is not a leaf on the stumpy trees under which the round wooden tables are spread with "Frankfürter" and "Wiener Schnitzel"—that the biting wind whistles through their

bare branches, or that the beer-mug rattles against the chattering teeth of the blue and shivering pleasure-seeker; that he has had his fun, *der Juchs ist halt da!* and he returns to his thrice-heated stove or stuffy coffee-house with a gladdened heart. Let the real, downright fine weather set in, and you shall see what you shall see. There are not *fiakers* enough, at fancy prices, omnibuses, or open cars on the tramway to accommodate the exhilarated legions eager to slake their never-entirely-to-be-assuaged thirst in the dearly-beloved extra-mural haunts that are the pride of the Kaiserstadt. Two-seated cabs—the family vehicle *de prédilection* of the Viennese, who consider sitting on one another's knees eminently *gemüthlich*—may be seen labouring along the execrable rural lanes with cargoes of ten and eleven, the driver smoking a long pendent wooden pipe, and flogging his melancholy jade with merciless vigour; parties of green or purple capped students, spectacled and cigarred, with their arms round each other's necks, and vociferating German, Slavonic, or Hungarian *Lieder*, block up the side-paths, and brutally force ladies or timid loungers into the roadway; there are six inches of yellow dust everywhere, and water-carts exist only in fervid imaginations; the sounds of a thin fiddle, or tinkling and musically unsatisfactory zither, are heard from each beer-shop window, struggling intermittently with the roar of voices raised by the noisy tipplers within. N.B. Everybody, as a rule, in Austria speaks at the top of his voice. The fields and woods are bestrewn with sweethearts, so unscrupulously demonstrative of their tender passions in broad daylight as to qualify

them for participation in the most out-and-out love-feast ever celebrated in a Welsh chapel, the while the papas, and mammas too, are swilling away for the dear life, philosophically careless of what Kathi, Tinerl, and Gusti may be transacting under the greenwood tree. Some months later arrives what, in the hybrid jargon of Vienna, is called "Ein Malheur;" but that is surmounted without much weeping, wailing, or gnashing of teeth. For what purpose else, I should like to know, exists that gigantic institution, the Findel-Anstalt, save for the convenient termination of these awkward little domestic incidents? Next spring Kathi, Tinerl, and Gusti will be again as chirpy as crickets, and as ready to sally forth into the leafy fastnesses; whilst their amiable parents will be even more *nachsichtig* for their offspring's gambols than before, comforting themselves with the sage axiom, "Was geschehen ist, ist geschehen" (What is done can't be undone), and drowning their shrewd previsions of probable *malheurs* in a foaming flood of malt liquor. It is difficult to convey to English readers, in terms that will not offend them, an idea of the deplorable laxity, so far as private morals are concerned, prevailing in the liveliest and loosest of capitals. That which moves society in England to indignation loud and deep scarcely excites a comment in Vienna. Such a thing as an action for seduction is never heard of. People put their dishonour in their pockets, and live on happily as if nothing had occurred to disturb their equanimity. Domestic servants enjoy, as it were, a license for immorality hallowed by custom. Nobody thinks of dismissing a cook or a chambermaid

because she has a "misfortune," or a series thereof. She stipulates for the visits of her *geliebter*, by whom she probably has half-a-dozen children, and who then marries somebody else; and if you endeavour to put any check upon her love arrangements, she will tell you, "Ich muss aber auch meine Dummheiten machen!" and give you warning on the spot. Without servants you cannot live, and there is literally no exception to this rule; so Johann the journeyman shoemaker, or Schani the jäger-corporal, continues to adorn your kitchen at all holiday times and seasons—how many these are one must live in Austria to credit—and to conduct your sentimental Toni or gushing Clärchen to masked balls, whence they return at six in the morning, to country excursions and to Prater-fairs—all of which lead direct, though by different paths, to the enormous establishment above referred to.

The Austrians in general, and the Viennese in particular, are essentially holiday-making, pleasure-loving people. Indolence and thriftlessness are two of the many maleficent legacies left them by the system of paternal government which used to instruct them in this wise, "Drink, eat, smoke, and dance—you shall have your beer, vivers, and tobacco cheap, and your music for nothing; don't trouble yourselves to think—*we* will do that for you. Of course you must work a little, else you will have no florins to spend; but we will make your lives as easy as possible for you—for instance, in concord with Holy Mother Church we will enforce the observance of forty or fifty holidays every year, besides Sundays, upon which, as you will not be allowed to

work, you can amuse yourselves to your hearts' content. *Nur tanzen, und singen, und alleweil fidel!* Only don't meddle with politics, administration, etc. Those arts are in our province; yours be it *desipere in loco.*" The paternal government is no more; but its lessons have taken root in the nature of the people, and, like most weeds, flourish exceedingly, however poor the soil from which they spring. It is truly said that "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy;" be assured that all play and no work produces precisely the same effect. At least a dozen generations must pass away ere the vices grafted upon the kindly Austrians by their former rulers can be eradicated; at present, prodigality and carelessness are as natural to them as good humour and good looks. They groan, or affect to groan, under a taxation in many respects merely nominal as compared with ours; and I will venture to affirm that if the men of the working and trading classes would consent to knock off only one of the many mugs of beer they daily imbibe, and devote the money saved to the payment of a new tax, they would contribute a sum at the end of the year to the State cash-box which would liquidate the annual deficit twice told. Labourers and artisans throughout the Hapsburg realm live better, as a rule, than clerks, subordinate Government officials, and small tradespeople do in Italy, or even Prussia. There is abundant, nay exuberant well-being in Austria, so far as the material good things of this life are concerned. No stronger evidence of general popular prosperity can be afforded than the extravagant quantity of amusement allowed themselves by the lower classes. Where shall we find

another city the size of Vienna which maintains during eight months out of the twelve a gigantic Greenwich Fair at its very gates, in the park frequented by the aristocracy—the corso or ring of the Kaiserstadt? Fancy half Hyde Park covered with booths and tents from March till October, trumpets braying, drums beating, huge organs grinding out paralytic waltzes, swings and merry-go-rounds creaking, guns popping incessantly, gipsy bands playing, hawkers bellowing, a few dozen beer establishments built amongst the trees, and surrounded with mighty outworks of round tables, benches, and chairs; coffee-houses, waxworks, menageries; fantoccini acrobats; tanks occupied by divers, who grin hideously through their glass masks at the public gathered round little green bull's eyes let into the sides of the cistern; fancy, I say, Hyde Park invaded and held by an army of showmen and purveyors of creature comforts! Would such a colony be able to earn its existence during two-thirds of the year in our overgrown metropolis? I think not; but it does in Vienna; nay more, it makes a very good thing of its squatting season. On Sundays and Saints' days the Würstl or Sausage Prater is crammed, and the shows are beset all day long by crowds of children ranging from six to sixty in age; this, however, is but natural, considering the eagerness with which all classes of Viennese plunge into diversion. But the wonder is that on the off-days, the busy week-days, none of the booths or shows are shut up; on the contrary, they are wide open and as noisy as ever. Their proprietors find that it pays them well to keep going, even on Fridays; and so the drums beat,

the organs grunt and screech, the tame wild beasts moan and growl, the fat lady puts on her scanty ball dress, the roundabouts revolve, and the beer mugs are replenished, month in, month out, all through the spring, summer, and early autumn. The pleasures of this vivacious fair have passed into a proverb. *Lustig wie im Prater*, say the Viennese, when they desire to typify the acme of joviality.

Suppose we take a stroll, on a quiet day, through this place of blissful resort. When we arrive at the end of the stately Prater-strasse, which cuts the suburbs of Leopoldstadt into two unequal sections, the Prater faces us. It is pierced by three apparently endless drives, entered under the stone and iron arches of the Verbindungs-Bahn, or railway connecting the Northern and Southern lines. The avenue stretching away to the right as far as the Danube, nearly four miles of a perfectly straight road, is the fashionable Prater, thronged from four to seven P.M. by handsome equipages, splendidly mounted equestrians, and gaily dressed loungers of all ranks and conditions. That diverging leftwards is the high road to the Kaisermühle, the Danube Steam Navigation Company's wharves, the several boat-club houses; a somewhat monotonous and uninteresting thoroughfare. But it is with the centre drive that we have to do—for this is the Würstl Prater. You will presently find out by experience why this appetising name has been bestowed upon it. The first hint we obtain of the Sausage Park's specialities is given us by the enormous, gaudy coloured placards and bills stuck all over the railway arch, announcing natural, unnatural, and artificial marvels to us by the dozen. Here are the

manifestoes of the Double-headed Infant, the Gifted-with-human-intelligence Rabbit, the Sister Dwarfs, so small that they must be inspected through a powerful microscope. Having gathered some extraordinary information from these documents, we enter the joyful precincts, and are soon deep in the turmoil of the place. Let me call your attention to the menagerie of Signor Coccio, who, if we may judge from the illustrations adorning the front of his establishment, must have captured the more ferocious of his company in a series of personal combats highly creditable to his physical vigour and moral intrepidity. Behold a painting representing the subjugation of two savage crocodiles by Signor Coccio, an athlete of surpassing beauty and fashionable costume—surely that seedy-looking man seated by the entrance, smoking a short pipe and teasing an infuriated baboon chained to a pole, cannot be the original of this Herculean Adonis. On inquiry, we find he is—I suppose he was younger and dressed in his best when he conquered the crocodiles. One of these amphibia, whose cheery expression of countenance is in no way dashed by the fact that he is crunching a native child between his teeth, crouches at Signor Coccio's feet. One is painfully struck by the quantity and consistence of the blood spirting from his jaws. Close to him stands a French staff officer, waving his sword bravely; otherwise he appears more ornamental than useful; a distracted Arab matron completes the group. Behind the triumphant Coccio the other crocodile is being led away to captivity by slaves, amiable resignation beaming from every lineament of his kindly face. A full-rigged ship

of about ninety guns lies at anchor in the background. How did she get so far up the Nile? Only Providence and Signor Coccio know. The scene of this thrilling action is enriched by several mutilated corpses, the *disjecta membra* of the subdued animal's early breakfast. Hard by this picture is another, showing how Coccio brought a raging Bengal tiger to a sense of his situation by firing a small pocket-pistol down his throat. The tiger is balancing himself on his hind legs, and there is a good deal of jungle about. *A rivederla, Signor Coccio; è un vero gagliardo!* Next we come to a lofty circular shed, whence proceeds a booming and grating noise, in which I recognise the disfigured outline of Strauss. Inside this building may be seen a colossal Noah's Ark, presided over by an Egyptian god sixteen feet high, round the base of whose pedestal gyrate the different animal species, bestridden by men, women, and children, all in a high state of delight. Talk of Una and the lion! there is a little fair-haired maid of five riding a grizzly bear of truculent mien, whilst her baby brother is borne round the ring by a spotted hyæna; papa proudly sits a cameleopard, and the rest of the family are mounted on swans, unicorns, dragons, and other such small deer. Artificially the birds coo and whistle, the domestic animals bleat and low, the *feræ naturæ* roar and howl, whilst ever the hoarse organ acts as chorus.

Even on ordinary week-days the Würstl Prater presents a highly animated appearance, something like that of Chalk Farm at Whitsuntide in the good old days when Primrose Hill was environed by green fields, and its tunnel a fearsome and mysterious object to holiday-

making children. Temptations of all sorts assail the lounger as he strolls along the broad avenues leading from the several gates to the chief beer-hall. There is a stage upon which stands a red and white châlet, into the penetralia of which, veiled by heavy hangings, you can peep furtively, catching a glimpse of black-looking cranks, wheels, levers, and other grim apparatus. What is it that is done in that dark retreat? Surely it must be the torture-chamber of the refreshment-department, fitted up for the punishment of recalcitrant waiters, cheating contractors, pickpockets, and members of the swell-mob. Not at all. It is a typographical establishment, to the presiding genius of which (a remarkably pretty girl) you may deliver up, if you list, your white pocket-handkerchief, to receive it back in a couple of minutes enriched with a complete view of St. Stephen's Cathedral that shall endure for all time. Hard by, a fortune-teller, of the most modern fashion, has set up a vaticinatory machine, somewhat too scientific to be consistent with superstition. There is a high bronze pedestal, upon which is fixed an upright glass tube, some eighteen inches long, filled with a mystic liquor curiously resembling slightly dirty water; above this is a letter-box. The High Priest of the Oracle contained in this glass tube, a weird personage, in velveteens and corduroys—by birth, I should say, a native of the debatable land between Hernals and Lerchenfeld—takes with a certain solemnity your ten-kreuzer note (2d. sterling) and inserts it in a slit cut in the top of the letter-box; upon which a small demon, hitherto lying *perdu* under the shade of the said box, dives slowly down to the bottom

of the tube, and ascends majestically to his former retreat. This thrilling ceremony having been performed, the High Priest opens the box and takes out of it a letter, freshly wafered and addressed, which he delivers to you; and in this letter you find your Fate, in the shape of a male or female photograph, as the case may be, and a printed prognostication of all that will happen to you if you don't take care! At the bottom of the formula (how characteristic of Austrian soothsaying!) are displayed the five numbers upon which you are recommended to "play in the lotteries." At least a dozen booths have been erected by proprietors of a sporting game that is a cross between quoits, pitch and toss, and "knock 'em downs." The player, for a consideration, is furnished with six flat thin metal discs, exactly fitting a number of circular holes in a frame fixed in a vertical position about three yards from the line of delivery. If he succeed in pitching a disc so justly that it falls into a hole, he receives a prize; if not, so much the better for the spirited proprietor of the establishment. It must be a game full of feverish excitement, for I notice that the booths devoted to it are always crowded, and that men spend hours in fruitless attempts to attain success—some of the prizes being gorgeous workboxes, accordions, and articles equally desirable. The gingerbread and "zuckerbäckerei" tents are very splendid affairs, profusely adorned with eatable images of religious signification, Our Saviour of the Five Wounds and Mary of the Bleeding Heart being the favourite comestibles, indigestible enough to fulfil purposes of penance. There are one or two large gymnasia,

well provided with trapezes, upon which the *Turner* disport themselves when it is not too hot. There are drinking temples, in which beauteous damsels, *décolletées* to distraction, dispense iced soda-water and raspberry-juice at a penny a beaker. There are flower booths, inhabited by other beauteous damsels, arrayed in gay-coloured peasant costumes, who will make you up a bouquet from sixpence to two pounds in price. It is a sort of chronic Kermesse, bar the goats, cows, fowl, baskets of vegetables, and servants for hire.

Whenever I have gone through the agreeable mockery —so far as the enjoyment of sport is concerned—of attending an Austrian race-meeting, the question has invariably suggested itself to my mind, "How is it, and why, that this people, which has not the slightest sympathy with any public game involving a display of supreme strength and skill, and which has not any comprehension of such a sport, voluntarily puts itself to great expense, trouble, and personal inconvenience in order to witness horse-racing, an amusement which requires for its appreciation a greater variety and exactitude of knowledge than any other sport?" It is a curious characteristic of the Fatherland, indeed, that its sons entertain a positive dislike, mingled with philosophic contempt, for such athletic games as Englishmen, Frenchmen, and even Italians delight in; and regard physical exertion as a "waste of force" wholly unjustified by the amount of pleasure to be derived from it. In short, they are utterly wanting in that "Lebensglückseligkeit," or rapturous enjoyment of vigorous vitality that prompts the Anglo-Saxon or the Latin to strain his muscles and

expand his lungs in violent efforts. The object to be attained being neither increment of wealth nor advancement in rank, but simply hearty, honest pastime, the effort is altogether incomprehensible to the too logical German mind. I think I may venture to assert that I know my German cousins and their country pretty well; but throughout years of residence amongst them, and intimate acquaintance with their habits of life, I have never yet seen the youth of Almayne play at any game whatever except cards and billiards. Shooting at a mark is very popular, certainly, throughout Germany; but that is a description of sport in which the weakest of sinew is frequently the victor, marksmanship depending rather upon keenness of sight than upon physical strength or activity. There is not, to the best of my belief, a tennis-court, racket-ground, or cricket-field in all Germany; few men row; nobody save the members of the aristocracy ever thinks of riding; nobody wrestles, boxes, or plays at quarter-staff—a favourite pastime even in the French provinces. There is scarcely a pair of battledores, a hoop, or a trap, bat and ball to be purchased in Vienna, Berlin, or Munich, let alone the smaller Teutonic cities. Girls and boys know nothing about skipping-ropes, or Les Grâces, archery, or hockey; foot-ball is about as common as the trident and net of the Roman gladiators; and even marbles, mildest of juvenile playthings, are strangers to the land. When German children go out in the country for a holiday with their parents, they walk hand-in-hand in an orderly and spiritless manner, talking, I verily believe, about cube-roots, metaphysics, and the spectrum

analysis—or, if girls, of their dresses and the amiable weaknesses of their governess. Should some uproarious and uncontrollable youngster break the ranks, and attempt to run a few yards upon a tempting piece of grass—which, by the way, is always "streng verboten," or strictly forbidden, in every public park—his parents summon him to their side with cries of agony, lest he should overheat himself, or, more horrible still, get out of breath! I have had youthful relatives at German schools, and they have pitifully assured me that, during the hours allowed for recreation, none of their schoolfellows would ever play with them at anything, and that as for fighting, that surpassing delight of the British boy, such a thing was never dreamt of, however bitter the provocation or keen the rivalry. I recapitulate all these facts only in support of my assertion that Germans take no interest whatever in what Englishmen and Frenchmen understand by "sport." How can they, brought up as they are? True, at college they are ready enough for "Schlägerei," duels, ninety-nine of which out of a hundred are mere farces, whilst all are contemptible; but such trumpery exhibitions of hobbledehoy bumptiousness do not assuredly belong to the category of athletic games. As a race they know rather less about racing than Laplanders or Venetians. Is it surprising, therefore, that they should discover no excitement in the events of a spring meeting, or that they should contemplate the thundering rush past the winning-post with much such a dull wonder as a deaf and dumb man might experience during an animated Parliamentary debate? As for the German ladies—blessings on their amiable, passionless mediocrity!—they care

more for the sentimental sausage copiously moistened with the soul-soothing beer, than for all the horse-races recorded in history. I have seen these dear and mawkish creatures sitting in grand-stands engaged in steadfast knitting, and never raising their gentle eyes from their work, even when the clump of straining horses came thundering by in the "finish," a few feet from their pins and wool. I think they secretly like going to races, not only because it affords them an opportunity for pitting their toilettes against those of the intimate friends they call "Du," but inasmuch as it furnishes a pretext for a bout of eating and drinking, extra or supplementary to the five or six regular meals they consume daily. Dare I say that fashion and food are the alpha and omega of an average German girl's existence; everything else, including needlework, religion, and the tender passion, being *Nebensache* a thing of minor importance? Setting truth before prudence, I am afraid I must say it, at the risk of general reprobation by the fair of the Fatherland. At all events, they are anything but "sportive," and are as much out of their place at a race meeting as a guinea-pig would be in a rat-pit, or roast veal and plum sauce at a Templars' call-supper.

The German race is a wise, brave, thrifty, persevering, philosophical, industrious, instructed people; but its greatest admirer cannot with truth assert that it knows how to dine. In fact it does not dine. It eats with a frequency and copiousness that have no parallel amongst the consumptive specialities of other European nations; but the art of dining as realised in France, England, and Russia, is "to yt unknowe." There is scarcely a city in the Fatherland

with which I am not acquainted; and, with the honourable exception of Frankfort-on-Maine, which can boast of possessing the very best hotel on the Continent, from a gastronomical point of view, there is not one, according to my belief, in which the requirements of the cultivated stomach can be met in a satisfactory manner. The German notion of dinner—or rather of a meal—is the maximum amount of food for the minimum amount of cost. It matters little what sort of food, how cooked, or how served, so long as it is plentiful, and cheap. The average German's feelings with respect to nourishment was admirably illustrated some time ago in the "Fliegende Blätter," by a drawing of a Bavarian *bourgeois* at table, who, the "Mittagsessen" being at an end, is asked by his host whether he has dined well. He lays his hand upon his diaphragm, and replies, "No, not well; for it does not hurt me yet!" The national *cuisine* is, of course, what the popular proclivities have made it—gross, coarse, greasy, massive and incoherent. Carving is an accomplishment as unfamiliar to the inhabitants of the Fatherland as it is to the Ashantees. Beef is served to you at the leading German restaurants in chunks, veal in blocks, mutton in lumps. Fowls are split and quartered, apparently with a hatchet, before they are brought to table. The accessories of the board are of the rudest, most primeval description. You may count on the fingers of both hands the hotels and dining-rooms of Berlin and Vienna in which saltspoons are provided. I have positively *never* seen a fish-knife in any restaurant in Germany. Such an implement would be regarded by the majority of Germans, even belonging to the higher

classes, with as much surprise as a battle-axe or a bootjack ranged by the side of the ordinary "couvert." I was dining some years ago at the house of the Governor of Heligoland, the service of whose table was in every respect admirable. Amongst the guests were a Serene Highness, a Court Marshal, and the chief aide-de-camp of a Royal Prince, who had just returned from the grand tour. This gentleman, whose breast was covered with the complimentary decorations bestowed upon him during his pilgrimage from Court to Court, sat opposite me; and I noticed that, shortly after he sat down to table, he took up his fish-knife and regarded it with an inquiring gaze. Presently he was served with the turbot, which he proceeded to eat with the aid of his steel knife, leaving the silver instrument in its place by his plate! When ice-pudding was handed round an hour later, a sort of "Eureka!" look illumined his manly visage; he grasped his fish-knife, and with it complacently conveyed the "nesselrode" to his mouth. Christopher Columbus, when he cracked the egg, could not have been more thoroughly penetrated with the conviction that he was equal to the occasion than was evidently Count von Wartensleben. Finger-glasses have been largely introduced into German society of late years; only Germans wash out their mouths with the contents of their "bowl," instead of rinsing their fingers therein! Of all the strange performances that astonish an Englishman on the first occasion of his presence at a German meal, this, and the humorous practice of combing one's hair at table with a small-tooth comb—which I have seen gracefully executed by hundreds of

gentlemen holding high social rank—are perhaps the most startling. But they are really quite in keeping with the quality of German food, the method of its preparation, and the manner of its service.

If there be one city, however, in which this peculiarity of the noble Teutonic race is more distressingly developed than in another, it is Vienna. In Vienna you can dine less than even in Berlin. The Prussian capital possesses one restaurant, "under the Limetrees," kept by a Frenchman, where you can dine as well as at Bignon's or the Windham. Vienna does not own even an "honourable exception." I have tried them all. The most extraordinary experience I achieved during my long and painful researches amongst the Viennese restaurants, was that which occurred to me a few years ago at an establishment in the Wieden. If you went to church expecting to hear the Scriptures solemnly expounded, it would surprise you to find the nave occupied by a troupe of acrobats, and a strolling empiric dispensing bread-pills and tinted water from the pulpit. Visiting a ship of war, it might strike you as odd if you found a menagerie established on the quarter-deck and the captain engaged in taming a couple of lions in the foretop. An undertaker who sold toffy and lemon-rock, or an oculist in whose consulting-room you should discover, displayed for sale on a marble counter, a fine selection of chitterlings and lambs' fry, would probably awaken in your mind a mingled sense of perplexity and discomfiture. But all these anomalies appear to be reasonable, natural, and logical combinations of circumstances when they are contrasted with the astounding

phenomena presented by that restaurant in the Wieden. The surpassing wonder of the establishment was that, being ostensibly and avowedly dedicated to the provision of refreshment, edible and potable, you could purchase in it almost anything saleable the human mind could conceive, short of a firearm or a locomotive, except something to eat or drink. I remained there, hungering and thirsting, for one hour precisely, without being able to obtain even a morsel of bread; and during that time I was invited—nay, importuned—to become the possessor of the following articles: Stockings and socks, plain and coloured; writing-paper and envelopes; neckties, simple and complicated; visiting cards, blue and green spectacles, sealing-wax, combs and brushes, lollipops (can one be said to eat a lollipop or drink it?), cigar-tubes and pipes, parasols, garters, fans and perfumery, Brummagem jewellery of incredible variety and worthlessness, walking-sticks, plaster *figurini*, pens, lucifer matches, and staylaces. These were some of the things proffered to me by Herr —— when I went to him yearning for supper. I asked for bread, and he gave me a comb; for fish, and he gave me a staylace! Could I have satisfied my appetite with garters and sealing-wax, washed down with perfumery, I might have come away in a state of joyous repletion; or a surfeit of stockings, had textile fabrics of that class been a pabulum to which my interior economy had accustomed itself, might have brought about in me that satisfactory assurance of fulness to which the Bavarian gentleman formerly alluded to referred when he regretfully observed that "it did not hurt him yet." But, the capacity for enjoying these

matters failing one, I was obliged to depart as hungry as I came, and I will back the "restauration" as an anomaly against the Two-headed Nightingale or any other monstrosity ever exhibited in the Würstl Prater.

Of one extraordinary variety of Viennese social entertainment I deem it my duty to attempt a description before concluding this unreasonably lengthy chapter; I refer to the *Narrenabend*, a sort of maniacal soirée (as its title denotes) given yearly by one or other of the great artistic associations that abound in the city of the Hapsburg. The Festival of Fools is not an institution indigenous to the Kaiserstadt. Imported some thirty years ago from that perfumed city, Cologne, it took root in Vienna, and flourished exceedingly. Indeed, under the old *régime*, it was made the vehicle of expression for a thousand quips, jests, and satires—some of them biting enough—against the Government and its agents. In times when the columns of the Austrian press were closed to political criticism, and when it was "not permitted" to denizens of this Empire, under grievous pains and penalties, to comment unfavourably upon, or even discuss, the acts of the Administration, these *Narrenabende* were safety-valves through which the intelligent, discontented public let off its spare steam. Sharp sayings, uttered under the ægis of Folly, were allowed to pass unnoticed by the tiresome, tyrannical authorities, whose cue it systematically was not to interfere with the mere amusements of the people. Dressed as a fool, you might gibe at the Government to your heart's content. What did the Government care for

that? If you assumed the garb of everyday life, and, thus attired, took upon yourself to reckon up the guardians of the State, that was, literally, quite another pair of breeches, and the odds were that you would find it out in a singularly unpleasant manner. But the Imperial Royal and Apostolic Paternal Police was always loth to trespass upon the preserves of Viennese Gemüthlichkeit; and if a favourite form of that mysterious faculty of enjoyment was to poke fun at Cabinet Ministers from beneath a Tomfool's cap and bells, why then the P. P. was conveniently deaf, and "let them rave." *On a changé tout cela* now-a-days; comic journals abound in caricatures of Excellencies, and political organs bristle with slashing leaders, in which the great are roughly handled, not to say roundly abused; whilst freedom of opinion and the right of its promulgation are established upon so firm a basis that the wildest democrat who courts persecution scarcely succeeds in achieving notoriety. That this mitigated condition of penalties political robs entertainments of the *Narrenabend* class of that prohibited spice which formerly imparted to them a special flavour, is undeniable; so the Fools Festival which I attended during the Carnival of 1868-9 had to depend for its success upon sheer fooling; and excellent fooling it was, by my halidom!

The festival was held in the Diana Saal, a huge apartment, now bath, now ball-room, according to the season, about twice the size of St. James's Hall. On arriving in the vestibule of the Saal, the particular Fool with whose experiences I am most intimately acquainted was

received by a strong guard of the committee there stationed to examine his credentials, and test his claims to admission into the Realms of Folly. These officers of lunacy were accoutred in gorgeous uniform; scale body armour, the word "Peace" inscribed upon their cuirasses —casque of about 500 B.C., surmounted by a dove bearing a breech-loader in its beak—epaulettes *à la* General Boum, *i.e.* small brass field-pieces—bare arms and legs, bar gauntlets and greaves—and, instead of a spear, or lictor's fasciculus, a squirt cannon of the Napoleonic sort, warranted to deliver nine thousand fulminating shells per minute. Having been "passed through" by this formidable outpost, our Fool entered the Saal and paid his respects to the worthy Arch-Fool (the President of the Wienermaennergesangverein, Mr. Dumba), whose suit of motley, designed by one of Austria's most eminent historical painters, transformed him for the nonce into the seemliest of court jesters—a living illustration, cut out of a mediæval Royal Household List. After exchanging greetings with a baby of six feet four, stiff with swaddling clothes, a Red Indian in his war paint, a lively young sawsetter, and an ambulatory anatomical museum, by many degrees the nastiest-looking object that ever met his gaze, our Fool seated himself at the committee table, and looked round him. Surely, the strangest sight in the world! The vast apartment, as well as the broad galleries by which it is surrounded, was filled with beings, apparently, for all the semblance they bore to men of the age we live in, belonging to Dreamland, or the Domains of Nightmare. From the shifting mass of colour occupying the body of the hall

arose a devilish din, made up of hooting, trombones, yelling, kettledrums, whistles, gongs, tomtoms, ophicleides, tambourines, bells, laughter, street cries, and fifty other undefinable noises. To describe one-half the eccentricities of the scene would be to write a portly volume. I must content myself with sketching a few stray wonders as they flit across my memory. Let us take the nearest table. There sit the following lunatics: a man respectably clad in a dark shooting suit, but with face, hair, beard, hands, and feet dyed a bright scarlet; another enveloped from head to foot in a garment of peacock's feathers (the eye of the feather only); a school girl, in bib and tucker, with as luxuriant a pair of whiskers as a lieutenant-colonel in the Guards, and a gigantic metal syringe! Here is Diogenes, with his lantern, in a great puff and pother, seeking, we suppose, the traditional "honest man." Not so; he is merely looking for a singer — a search topsy-turvy enough, to be sure, within the own jurisdiction of the Wienermaennergesangverein. What has this gentleman done, that one side of his correctly-cut evening suit should be bright blue whilst the other is a ripe orange colour? One goes not thus into *salons*. Neither did I ever before see a finger-post walking about, with one arm pointing to Moscow and the other to Prague. Behold a bishop, with mitre, crozier, dalmatic, and stole, or whatever it is, all complete; only think of that in Austria—in Austria, I say again—and of the inference! Where's the police? "An it please ye, Sir Fool, the Concordat hath no might in this our realm." So mote it be elsewhere than in the Fools' kingdom!

At the *Narrenabend* to which I am especially referring several official, political, and financial bigwigs were present—this one with a penny whistle at his buttonhole, that one with a child's drum slung round his neck, a third wearing a tinsel crown, and so forth; amongst others an eminent Viennese banker, Baron Henikstein, whose face and figure were at that time as thoroughly institutions of the Austrian capital as the Stephanskirche itself. Two or three humorists belonging to the artist world determined to mystify the great financier, whose presence of mind was almost as remarkable as the length of his whiskers, or his indifference to changes of temperature, and set about to discover a man of exactly the same stature and *tournure* as the Baron. Having found what they wanted, they caused a wig and beard to be made by a celebrated *perruquier* in the Graben, well acquainted with the Baron's peculiarities; found out exactly what dress Henikstein would wear, even to the toy emblem destined to signify his adhesion to the principles of the festival; drilled their Doppelgänger carefully in the attitudes, gait, and gestures of his model; made up his face so artistically that his faith in his own identity was shaken; and turned him into the great assembly room, about ten minutes before the real banker arrived at the Diana Saal. Baron Henikstein was about as popular a man as can well be conceived, and his prototype was of course received with cordial greetings by hundreds of the assembled Fools. Presently, to everybody's astonishment, the first Baron having left the principal room by the supper-room door, a second entered from the ante-chamber. The Doppelgänger had been

instructed upon no account to meet Baron Henikstein face to face till the end of the evening, and not even to stay in the same room with him. The originators of the joke kept their accomplice, of course, posted up respecting the Baron's movements, and were successful in dodging the real Simon Pure for several hours. The worst of it was that the mock Baron affected to chime in with the humour of the evening, uttering scandalous statements without number, pouring forth sarcasms upon Church, State, and society, which were hailed with equal surprise and delight by his auditors; whilst the real Baron continued to be the perfect gentleman he always was, in no way altering his demeanour to suit the occasion, in consequence of which he was set down as the imitation by a large majority of those who alternated between the two heroes of the evening, frantically endeavouring to discover which was the genuine and which the false Baron. At length a meeting was brought about. The two bankers advanced towards one another, each followed by a troop of believers, and a scene ensued quite beyond description. I believe the mystification ended by the real Baron owning himself to be an impostor, and the Doppelgänger being carried triumphantly round the building. Perhaps so complete a practical joke was never got up before or since.

As the evening advanced organised pageants flowed into the already crowded room, and were received with frantic outbursts of applause. The first was a naval display. Preceded by a full band of marines, in which, however, the drum element was painfully prominent, the Ship of Folly rolled in, a banner with a strange device

floating at its mainmast head. It was guarded by a complete ship's company, officers and men, over a hundred strong, fully armed; and made a gallant show. Having completed the circuit of the Saal, amidst universal acclamation, the ship was brought to an anchor under the cross gallery, and the crew dismissed to "skylark." Fiddles, bagpipes, clarinets, and banjoes heralded the next procession: Bohemian emigrants, chiefly handicraftsmen, headed by life-like impersonations of the great Panslavists, Rieger and Palacky, and bearing high on a velvet cushion the holy crown of Wenceslaus, followed by the double-tailed Bohemian lion, tenderly led by a brace of Czech bakers. I distinctly heard the royal beast anathematise one of his ragamuffin escort, in language as vigorous as it was figurative, for treading on one of his tails. It would be hard to find such a ruffianly company in the back slums of Liverpool as that rioting, swearing, singing and fighting in the train of Leo; rags, dirt, and the tints of inebriety stamped the men as confirmed blackguards, whilst a *cachet* of utter degradation put the social standing of the mock women on a decided, if not an over-moral footing. Tawdry finery, jingling brass ornaments, and liberal exposure of highly muscular charms; such were the principal characteristics of the dancing Bohémiennes attached to the Czechish cortège. The third and longest procession consisted of a triumphal Abyssinian demonstration. Prester John, in all the pomp of savage royalty, surrounded by his harem, and attended by his Court, strode round the hall, uttering strange cries, and clattering his fantastic weapons in a terrible

manner. Amongst his suite paced solemnly a huge elephant and a still more gigantic camel. Four stalwart negroes bore on their shoulders a gilded cage, containing —alack and well-a-day !—an English prisoner, dressed in the very latest foreign-English fashion, and, as far as could be judged from cursory inspection through the bars of his den, in pretty good condition and excellent spirits. The whole of this costly pageant was got up with such a minute and artistic attention to detail, and the principal characters were so admirably supported (Theodorus was personified by Heinrich Brandeis, one of Vienna's young lions of finance and *salon*—a "curled darling" of the ladies, and thoroughly good fellow), that it proved the triumph of the evening. As soon as the sensation created by this magnificent spectacle had somewhat subsided, and the procession itself had dissolved into the body of the room, the special performances of the Choral Association were announced for commencement by triple roll of drum. The programme was a long and humorous one, of which one of the most remarkable features was the performance of a spectral drama, intituled, "Der Müller und sein Kind" (the Miller and his Child), which is invariably given at all the Viennese theatres on All Saints Day. It is one of those plays Richardsonian, in which everybody becomes a ghost by the dagger and bowl process, including, of course, the three leading personages, namely, the Miller, his Child, and her Lover. On this occasion these three characters were afflicted each with a chronic indisposition. The Miller's manly voice was broken by constant hiccoughs; his Child coughed out her woes, and the Lover suffered under

such a shocking cold in the head that, weary of sneezing out his passion, he was driven to express the tenderest feelings of his nature through the medium of a trombone.

The fun and riot continued till an early hour in the morning, when groups of acquaintances adjourned to the various *cafés*, to "see it out" with punch and grog, singing and shouting, cigars and coffee. The Festival of Fools for 1868 was over, without a hitch, a quarrel, or an accident. I wonder how many black eyes and fines at the police-courts would have been the consequences of a similar orgy in London. Decidedly, we English take our pleasure sadly; and if we overstep the decorous limits of mitigated melancholy we generally run into the other extreme, and break out into violent excess. It would be scarcely possible to induce fifteen hundred respectable Englishmen to see that there was any fun in feigning *dementia* for a whole night; perhaps it is as well that we are somewhat obtuse in this particular. All I can say is, that Austrians take to Folly with a will, imitate it admirably, and *don't fight over it.*

CHAPTER II.

Life in Berlin.

When I first made the acquaintance of the Prussian capital, some nineteen years ago, the city of the Little Bear was one of most dismal, dull, badly-paved and backward of first-class continental towns. Its population was at that time about six hundred thousand, including the garrison, and was surpassed in numbers by that of the Austrian Kaiserstadt. Now it amounts to considerably over thirteen hundred thousand, according to the latest official census, whilst Vienna has but lately achieved her million. During the interim, however, Berlin has undergone a transformation little short of the marvellous. Its older *quartiers* have been in great part rebuilt, and new ones have sprung up in every direction, laid out and built, in the majority of cases, with considerable taste and even splendour. Owing to the custom, prevalent throughout Northern Germany, of living in flats, modern Berlin houses are lofty and massive, frequently exhibiting great architectural merit, and nearly always presenting an imposing aspect. Stucco-faced, with lofty porticos and broad balconies that convey the impression of being stone; elaborately decorated with external ornament, and the uniformity of their general physiog-

nomy agreeably relieved, on two floors at least, by spacious *loggie*, or gigantic bow-windows, these huge mansions, in each of which from ten to twenty families are comfortably stowed away, have all the outward seeming of palaces. Indeed, they are apt to delude the foreigner, strolling for the first time through the streets of western and southern Berlin, into the conviction that the whole aristocracy, hereditary and financial, of Prussia must have gravitated from the provinces of the monarchy to the banks of the Spree, and there built for itself town houses on a scale suggested by the *palazzi* of the great Italian nobles in Rome, Florence, Milan, Venice, and Naples. Nothing could be more erroneous than such a deduction, drawn from the outward appearance of these stately piles. They are by no means the property of blue-blooded patricians, many-acred pillars of the throne, gifted by nature with quarterings unnumbered, and, from a Court point of view, "born" to an almost inconceivable extent; nor do they belong to millionaire manufacturers, nor to the prehensile and assimilative children of Israel who, in Berlin as in most other capitals with which I am familiar, hold undisputed sway over the rich realms of finance. Builders, contractors, and speculators are their owners, in nine cases out of ten; and for the most part they are heavily mortgaged. The Modern Athenians do not build or buy houses for their own accommodation, but in order that other people should live in them, paying the highest obtainable rents, bound down by leases of amazing one-sidedness—need I say that the one side is that which exclusively favours the landlords?—obliged to execute all imaginable repairs at

their own expense, and to submit to countless irksome stipulations, the least violation or neglect of any one condition invalidating the lease and rendering the tenant liable to be turned out into the street with more than lightning-like promptitude.

Not only does the Teutonic nobility, great and small, punctually abstain for many cogent and unchallengeable reasons from owning houses in the Prussian—I beg its pardon, the German—capital, but it manages to totter along pretty comfortably from the cradle to the grave without ever residing for longer than a few weeks at a stretch in that singularly expensive city. Four lustres ago, I ascertained accurately the number of the palaces belonging to and inhabited by representatives of the ancient Prussian, Markish, Pomeranian, Silesian, Rhenish, and Westphalian families, within the precincts of the "Royal Residenz." I found myself able to complete their tale upon the fingers of one hand. There were, in fact, but five such palaces; and, to the best of my belief, there are no more at the present day. One—a ducal mansion—was disposed of about six years ago by its illustrious owner on the ground that he could not afford to keep it for the sake of inhabiting it during the three months' Berlin season. His Serenity the Duke of Ratibor had not occupied it for more than a twelvemonth before he parted with it because, despite his exalted rank, he had been ruthlessly assessed for income-tax during one of his winter sojourns in the capital; and the inflexible Fiscus peremptorily refused to allow his claim for exemption, although it was based upon the touching fact that he already paid income-tax in the province wherein his

estates and residential castle were situate. To pay double income-tax for the privilege of living under his own roof in Berlin, as well as in Silesia, was more than this potent and wealthy peer could make up his mind to; so he got rid of his town-house, realising an uncommonly handsome sum of ready cash by the transaction. About the same time, Prince Radzivill also sold his spacious, old-fashioned palace in the Wilhelm-strasse to the Prussian State, which promptly renovated it from roof to basement, furnished it handsomely, and handed it over to Prince von Bismarck, by him to be occupied rent-free so long as he should continue to hold the offices of Imperial Chancellor and German Minister of Foreign Affairs. In its principal first-floor saloon—formerly the ball-room of the Radzivills—were held the meetings of the great Berlin Congress during the broiling summer of 1878; hard by that gorgeous apartment, in a small reception-room, the "Realm-Dog," a huge hound occupying the distinguished and confidential position of permanent body-guard to the Apostle of Blood and Iron, sprang at the throat of Alexander Michailovich, Prince de Gortchakoff, upon the occasion of that statesman's visit of ceremony to the German Chancellor a day or two before the opening of the Congress—and would undoubtedly have throttled the venerable diplomatist but for the prompt intervention of the master of the house.

Although Prince Radzivill had no reason to complain of the price paid to him for his quaint old family residence, greed of gain was by no means the motive that inspired him to part with it. He is enormously wealthy, and, for a rich man, tolerably indifferent to "filthy

lucre"—one to whom fifty thousand pounds more or less would certainly not constitute a paramount inducement to enter into any business arrangement inconsistent with his dignity. But, ever since the commencement of hostilities between the Prussian State and the Roman Church—hostilities that lasted without intermission for nearly twelve years—the position of the Radzivills, one of the greatest Catholic houses in the Monarchy, has been a painful and embarrassing one. The present head of the family is a godson of the Emperor William. His father, the Kaiser's namesake and dear personal friend, his senior by only three days, the favourite companion of his boyhood and trusted counsellor of his old age, was, up to the day of his death in 1870, the only living man, not of royal blood, privileged to address his Majesty by the familiar "thou" of German brotherhood. The intimacy of these two illustrious grey-beards, which endured unbroken throughout more than half a century, was rendered all the closer by sorrowful remembrances of old family troubles, common to both. The Emperor's first love had been a Radzivill —if I mistake not, a younger sister of Prince William Radzivill—one of the most beautiful and accomplished ladies of her day, whom her royal adorer passionately desired to make his wife. He was, however, heir-presumptive to the Prussian throne, a circumstance which rendered the obstacles to the wished-for marriage insurmountable. They were two; the Princess was a Roman Catholic and not born in the purple. Diversity of creed had, therefore, come between the Hohenzollern and Radzivill in early life, without, however, severing the

bonds of amity uniting them. It was destined, under the guise of a political struggle, to render those bonds irksome to both houses, through no fault of either, but rather by the force of circumstances beyond their control. When the May Laws came to be enforced, amongst their first victims were two Radzivills, the Princes Vladislav and Edmund, driven into exile by the prescriptions of those unnecessarily oppressive statutes. One was a Jesuit priest—the other a prelate of the Papal household; and so, to escape persecution, they were compelled to quit their native country. Under these circumstances, and others which I refrain from alluding to in this place, it was by no means surprising that the head of the Radzivills availed himself of the first opportunity presenting itself to him for disposing of his Berlin palace, which, indeed, had been closed to society for several years before it passed into the possession of the State.

Another of the five mansions which I took cognizance of nineteen years ago, as being the property of the noblemen residing in them to the exclusion of any other tenant, has also been acquired by the German Government, pulled down, and the new Houses of Imperial Parliament are being erected upon its site. This was the Rasczinski Palace, so named after its owner, a patrician of large fortune and the owner of a picture gallery renowned throughout Europe. It was an ugly building, facing—or rather, defacing—the eastern side of the magnificent Kaiserplatz, in the centre of which stands the most hideous monument in the universe; and its replacement by a stately and ornate edifice will be a great gain to Berlin.

Amongst the acquisitions made by Prussian territorial magnates, as it were to fill up the vacancies caused by the transactions above alluded to, the most splendid and costly is the Romberg mansion in the Wilhelm-strasse, purchased by Count Otho von Stolberg, upon his quitting the diplomatic career and accepting office as Vice-President of the Prussian Ministry, and popularly known as the "Stolberg Palace." Prince Frederick of Hohenzollern —a cadet of the Sigmaringen branch, and colonel of the Guard Dragoon regiment in which his elder brother, the Prince of Roumania, served his military apprenticeship —set up house upon his marriage, and owns a really handsome and commodious town residence in which he and his pretty young wife, *née* Tour and Taxis, dispense a tasteful and generous hospitality. Several of the banking and stock-jobbing *nouveaux riches* have also built themselves gorgeous palaces of marble, stone, and "art" bricks, inlaid with mosaics, graffiti, and I know not what mural decorations beside; such houses as, for instance, those of Borsig and Prinzheim, which count amongst the "sights" of the capital, and altogether eclipse the modest mansions of the Emperor, Crown-Prince, Princes Carl and Albrecht, and Prince of the Netherlands. But these highly ornate edifices being owned by persons who, according to the canons of Prussian court etiquette, have never been "born" at all, and therefore can scarcely be said to exist, do not count amongst the residential institutions of the German capital, representing, however inadequately, the great landowning interests and aristocratic traditions of the Teuto-Wendish *noblesse*.

To few European cities has been accorded such mundane promotion as to Berlin, which has, within six centuries, undergone advancement from an obscure and squalid Wendish fishing village to the capital of United Germany. It is hard to conjecture what can have been the motive inducing an extremely remote Elector of Brandenburg to select Berlin as the princely *Residenz* and political *chef-lieu* of the Marches constituting his Electorate—unless, indeed, he were inspired thereto by a notion akin to that which prompted a certain Spanish monarch to pick out the truly remarkable spot upon which Madrid stands as the fittest site for the capital of Spain; namely, because it occupied an exactly central position in that realm, then consisting of but little more territory than was comprised in the mountainous provinces of Léon and Castile. No more diametrical contrast can be conceived than that afforded by the respective physical configurations of the localities to which Old World Spaniards and Borussians, a few centuries ago, gave the names of Madrid and Berlin; and yet it appears not improbable that their *raisons d'être*, as capitals of important European States, were originally one and the same. Madrid is a sort of eyrie, painfully constructed upon a bleak and arid rocky plateau of the Sierra, several thousand feet above the sea-level; Berlin, a lowland settlement, built upon an equally bleak plain of sandy top and swampy bottom, more than abundantly watered, however, by sluggish rivers, broad placid meres, and oozy fens, the surface of which, if I mistake not, is a trifle below the Baltic high-water mark. It has been the work of ages, persevered in with a stubborn tenacity of

purpose highly characteristic of the cross-bred populations inhabiting the Northern Marches, to drain the substratum of bog (underlying the thick layer of sand upon which the sister cities of Berlin and Coelln, divided by the Spree, were erected towards the middle of the thirteenth century) in such sort that the masses of brick and stone superimposed upon its upper crust might rest firmly upon something like solid foundations, instead of sinking gradually into a combination of sand and slime incapable of sustaining their weight. Even as late as the reign of Frederick William I., a mighty builder before the Lord, who marked out house-sites where he listed and compelled his wealthier subjects to raise up mansions to themselves thereupon, the workmen excavating on either side of the Friedrich Strasse, with a view to laying the foundations of the residences in question, struck water at the depth of from fifteen to twenty feet, and that in such abundance that, but for the resolute and angry King's resolve to have his plans carried out to the letter, architectural enterprise in the so-called Friedrichstadt and Dorotheenstadt would have suffered a serious check. His Majesty, however, was not the man to be beaten by swamps, either at Berlin or Potsdam; so an inconceivable quantity of rubble, gravel, and other solid matter was hurled down upon the intrusive liquid—at the expense, I need scarcely say, of the unfortunate persons under royal command to build town-houses in the then new faubourgs, several substantial burghers and retired statesmen of good means being thereby brought to utter ruin and penury—until the contest between dry ballast and wet bog resulted in overwhelming victory to the former.

Thus many a stout brick and stucco house, in those Berlin urban districts which owe their genesis to the Protestant Hero's father, cost its original proprietor more actual money to build of those humble materials than if it had been constructed, on a decently hard piece of soil, of the costliest marbles ever quarried in Italy, Greece, or Asia Minor.

To the wearisomely monotonous aspect and surpassingly thankless nature of the country they inhabit, the Mark Brandenburgers, as well as the other tribes of "hardy Norsemen" who people the Mecklenburgs, Hanover, Brunswick, Pomerania, the Altmark, Uckermark, East and West Prussia, etc., probably owe the sternness of character, prosaic singlemindedness, and indomitable obstinacy that have enabled them to achieve German Unity and to direct the destinies of the mightiest and most highly cultured, as well as most homogeneous, of Continental nations. Those vast, sad-coloured, deadly dull plains that extend over a section of northern Europe well-nigh a thousand miles broad—roughly speaking, from the frontier of Holland to that of Russia—breed millions of bullet-headed, deep-chested, hard-handed carles, whose every-day lives, from boyhood to old age, are exclusively spent in unremitting effort to vanquish the natural infertility of their native soil; men to whom the prospect of strife with those less indurated by ceaseless toil and chronic hardship than themselves, is ever welcome; for it would seem to be their inborn destiny to issue periodically from their own swampy wastes and sandy deserts to overrun lands more productive, not unmindful of booty, and to subjugate neighbouring

peoples, enervated by prosperity or demoralised by indulgence. What a dismal country is that North-German, or more correctly, Wendish region, in the very heart of which Berlin is set, like a handsome mosaic in a pinchbeck frame! From Düsseldorf to Kœnigsberg there is scarce a rising ground, two hundred feet high, to be seen on either side the railway line. Enormous plains, chiefly dark drab-coloured, stretch away to the horizon, southwards as well as northwards. At long intervals a row or two of undersized trees breaks the otherwise uninterrupted monotony of the landscape. Other element of the picturesque is there none. The sparse villages are, for the most part, solidly built and clean, but superlatively commonplace. The economist will doubtless regard them as most satisfactory objects; but to the artist's eye they cannot but appear little short of detestable. Like the sturdy, heavy-fisted, prosaic folk who inhabit them, their utility is as undeniable as their uncomeliness. People bred up amongst such surroundings are bound to look upon mere existence as a woundily serious piece of business, in which duty and necessity are the chief factors, and from which pleasure must needs be rigorously eliminated. To borrow a particularly happy figure of speech from the immortal Mantalini, to them "life is one demd horrid grind."

As an apt illustration of the temper of mind to which these men, so heavily handicapped in the race of Life by the physical conditions of their native land, are brought, even in early manhood, I may here venture to quote an odd experience of my own, accruing to me during the Franco-German war. Towards the end of December,

1870, when the snow-shrouded soil round Paris was frozen nearly a foot deep, I was riding, one inexpressibly bitter afternoon, through a section of the Prussian lines of investiture between Marly and Bougival; when, at a sharp turn of the road, I came upon an outpost, consisting of a corporal's party from a regiment belonging to the 5th (Kirchbach's) Corps d'Armée. The usual formalities had to be gone through, as a matter of course; and, having duly satisfied the Herr Unteroffizier, by imparting to him the *parole du jour*, that I was neither spy nor "loafer," I entered into conversation with the worthy fellow. He, and the men under his command, sturdy young "liners," were blue with cold, although as warmly clad as the requirements of active field duty would permit. It was Christmastide, I remember; and I was smitten with compassion by the wearied, half-frozen appearance of the humble legionaries, so far from their homes and families at that festive season of the year, subjected to fatigue and exposed to danger by day and night, instead of being cosily seated by glowing stoves in their own weather-tight little cottages, haply lit up by the twinkling tapers of the Christmas Tree. "This weather is desperately hard upon you men on outpost duty," I said to the corporal, holding out my brandy-flask. "Don't you wish this vile siege were over, and that you were back again in your own village?" "I, sir?" he replied in his rugged dialect, raising his eyebrows in ineffable astonishment; "I wish myself back home? not a bit of it. Not such a fool. *Hier ist es gut!* Why, I get a bellyful of fresh meat here every day, as much white bread as I can put away, half a bottle of

wine, two or three *schnaps*, and a couple of cigars or a *loth* of good strong tobacco. At home I live upon cabbage and black bread—perhaps eat my fill of meat twice a year—as for wine, I hardly knew the taste of it before I came to France. No, sir—I wish I were never going home again. This is the place for me, and such as me. There is the risk, of course, of being shot by the 'verflixte Franzosen;' but we are all glad enough to take that, one day with another, so long as we may eat and drink in this grand style. Believe me, sir, I was never so happy or well off in my whole life before, and I wish, for my part, that the war would last for ever!"

In the good old days when Berlin was, so to speak, in the bud, about half a dozen years before it blossomed out into Imperial splendour, a foreigner, visiting that city with residential views and provided with a goodly sheaf of introductions to persons of official or social importance, could, with the aid of a first-class droshky, get through a handsome round of visits within the limits of a summer day. But of late years it has expanded, particularly to the westward, with such extraordinary rapidity, and the new *Zinshaeuser* offer so many advantages, in the shape of conveniences and sanatory arrangements, over the houses situate in the central districts of the town, that Princes and Professors, Peers and Plenipotentiaries, Court dignitaries and magnates of finance, commerce, and the arts, have migrated from their old haunts within a rifle-shot of the Linden to the magnificent suburbs environing Berlin *extra muros*—if the prosaic German capital had any walls to speak of—in the direction of Charlottenburg, Lichterfelde, and the

Kreuzberg. Nowadays, a pilgrimage of "afternoon calls," such as persons who mix in good society are expected to make at short periodical intervals, is a costly and comprehensive enterprise—particularly costly as far as the expenditure of time is concerned, and capaciously comprehensive with respect to space, as people of condition, who, a score of years ago, all resided within one *Polizei-Revier*, or police-district, are now spread about over seven or eight such administrative divisions of the overgrown city on the Spree. I say overgrown, because the supply of houses derived from exaggerated speculations in bricks and mortar (not forgetting stucco) far exceeds the demand for that useful article; a circumstance which, supplemented by the disagreeable fact that rents are pretty generally kept up to the fantastic rates they attained when the "fever of the milliards" was at its topmost height, results in the total emptiness, from basement to roof, of many stately mansions. Rents doubled themselves in Berlin, not by a gradual and reasonable process working onward continuously throughout a quarter of a century, as in other growing European capitals, but within three years of such unhealthy excitement as few modern cities have undergone. The influx of the French war indemnity into an Empire of which Berlin had with startling suddenness become the political and commercial centre, completely turned the heads of the thrifty and thitherto prudent Germans, who were seized by a delirium of speculation that prompted them to dissipate over a hundred and fifty millions sterling of the national savings with almost unprecedented recklessness. They believed that wealth had come to them,

as it were in the night, justifying them in launching out into enterprises from adventuring upon which they had theretofore been debarred by the stringent exiguity of their means. Everybody who had anything in the way of *biens immeubles* to sell, exhibited an impetuous eagerness to part with it at a fancy price, and found somebody equally anxious to acquire it upon those terms, at the expense, I need scarcely say, of the general public, beset by an irresistible craze for speculative investments. Old-established businesses, of every conceivable description, were ceded by their owners to Limited Liability Companies, and paid for in shares which were "financed" up to an extravagant premium, only to become utterly valueless when the inevitable crash came to pass. In house-property, more especially, speculation of this class ran riot. I remember a ramshackle old mansion in the Mauer-strasse, one flat of which I had occupied for a short time (but had been compelled to quit precipitately by reason of the insufferable stenches with which it was pervaded), that changed owners thrice within a week during the "Milliard Madness." Its real value was about fifteen thousand pounds. By its original owner, a Silesian Prince, it was sold to a notorious speculator for twenty-three thousand, and resold by the latter on the following day to a "promoter" of Companies for forty-seven thousand. Three days later, this sagacious gentleman made it over to one of the several Limited Liability enterprises fostered by himself, and rather prided himself upon his moderation in only taking eighty-four thousand pounds of the shareholders' money for the venerable building. It is gratifying to reflect that he did not

keep his ill-gotten gains long, but was, shortly after completing this remarkable transaction, ruined as utterly as the most miserable of his victims could desire; for he, too, was infected by the rabies of speculation, and invested all his enormous profits in mushroom stock that collapsed one fine day, leaving him a hopeless pauper.

During that terrible period of popular illusions and audacious swindling which terminated in such overwhelming calamities to the German middle classes, rents went up in proportion to the fictitious rise accruing in the value of all kinds of property. But they scarcely fell at all, oddly enough, when the general smash-up brought the price of houses down with a run; nor have they suffered much appreciable abatement since that memorable cataclysm swallowed up at one fell gulp the fruits of a century's national thrift. The fact is that even so appalling a catastrophe as that of 1873 could not avail to arrest the natural development of a city which had been so recently and unexpectedly promoted from the rank of a provincial (from the German point of view) Residenz to that of an Imperial capital, harbouring the legislative and administrative machinery by which forty-two millions of Germans had professed themselves content to be governed. Berlin, in its new character, could not fail to attract intelligence, capital, and enterprise from all parts of the Fatherland, and the call upon its structural resources for house accommodation soon became greater than it could meet. The immigration, in a word, that in less than a decade increased the population of Berlin by three hundred thousand souls, kept up house-

rent to a standard altogether incompatible with "the eternal fitness of things;" that is to say, an eight-roomed flat in an average Berlin street lets for a larger sum annually than is asked for a London ten-roomed house in a convenient quarter; and rent, throughout the middle classes of Berlin society, represents one-fourth of the tenant's total income, instead of one-sixth. The wonder is, how Government officials, commercial clerks, and other well-educated respectable persons in the receipt of salaries varying between £100 and £300 per annum—and of such the great bulk of the Berlin middle-class is composed—contrive to keep body and soul together, after paying their rent. That they experience considerable difficulty in so doing may be inferred from the fact that, in the course of the year 1881, over one hundred thousand distrainments for rent and taxes were levied within the precincts of the capital. State and town taxes, all told, as assessed upon incomes by the authorities after a peculiarly arbitrary fashion, amount to about thirteen per cent. To this complexion have augmented Army Budgets and costly municipal improvements brought the Berlin ratepayer; and it may be broadly asserted that no one, however small his or her means, is exempt from income-tax, since domestic servants are required to pay it upon the amount of their frequently slender wages.

How, under these conditions, a vast number of persons occupying official positions of high rank, but small remuneration, manage to make both ends of their domestic estimates meet at the end of the year, is a mystery that I have hitherto failed to penetrate, despite

my eight years' sojourn in the German capital. Take the case, for instance, of an average Regierungs-Rath, or Government Councillor—a gentleman who in England would be a Departmental Senior Clerk with a salary of from six to eight hundred a year. The Prussian Regierungs-Rath, unless exceptionally favoured by luck or official protection, has served his country for at least thirty—more probably, forty—years before attaining that high bureaucratic station. His salary, at the very outside, is £250 per annum. Of course, he has married early in life—they all do—and is the head of a large family; for the Prussian state *employé* is as prolific as the British curate or the Roumanian peasant. His boys and girls have to be clothed, fed, and educated; his wife, who is socially a personage, has to "keep up appearances," and give a coffee entertainment every now and then to other "Lady Councilloresses," her natural and necessary cronies. He himself has to present a decent appearance at his bureau, to live in a tolerably respectable house, to wear clothes that are in keeping with his rank and responsibilities (which include liability to attend Ministerial soirées, and even the crowning glory, if he be of noble birth, of an occasional "command" to a Court festivity, at which he must appear in uniform); to keep out of debt, and, generally speaking, to represent honourably and creditably in his own person, as well as in the conduct and aspect of his family, the State he serves. If he fulfil all these conditions, it is a guinea to a gooseberry that his grateful sovereign will reward his exemplary behaviour with the Third Class of the Red Eagle; but I have never heard that the posses-

sion of that glorious distinction exercised a calming effect upon hunger or was in any way instrumental in filling up the vacuum which provokes that vexatious infirmity. Many years ago, before rents rose and taxes were screwed up to their present attitude, I asked myself the question, "How does the typical Regierungs-Rath live?" and I am still pausing for a reply.

It can hardly fail to occur to the intelligent foreigner whose lines are cast in the German capital and whose social position obliges him to fall in with the ceremonious observances current in that, as in every other Teutonic Residenz, that the phenomenal enlargement of Berlin within the last ten years must be the source of infinite repining to a very large class of the community, belonging to an eminently respectable and intelligent stratum of society; I mean, the German bureaucracy. In the lives of those well-educated but impecunious men, hundreds of thousands in number, holding subordinate office under the State or aspiring to the obtention of such office, formal and complimentary visiting plays a very important part. This wearisome and ridiculous custom has taken such deep root in the German national character that all the intellectual emancipations and social enfranchisements of modern times have proved unavailing to extirpate it. To achieve nomination to a post in the Government service—or, having succeeded in establishing that footing upon the first rung of the official ladder, to attain anything like abnormally rapid advancement in the bureaucratic career—it is in Germany considered expedient to display a punctilious assiduity in harassing all manner of more or less influential per-

sonages with deferential and congratulatory calls, upon anniversaries of special import or interest to themselves. Besides the oppressive New Year's visit, practically obligatory upon every *employé* who wishes to stand tolerably well with his official superiors, calls have to be made upon these latter *à propos* of their birthdays, name-days, wedding-days, service-jubilees, decoration-conferment-anniversaries, and a host of other commemorative occasions. According to the *lex non scripta* of German social etiquette it is indispensable that these calls be performed during the day-time and in full evening dress —conditions which, to British apprehensions at least, seriously aggravate the annoyance and absurdity intrinsically incident to such transactions. It is expected, moreover, of that model being happily described in the Teutonic vernacular as "*ein feingebildeter Mann*," that he should pay this empty and tiresome description of compliment to his private acquaintances as well as to his administrative chiefs and *Gœnner*, or protectors. Consequently, the aspiring Government clerk, sucking magistrate or embryonic *Candidatus Theologiæ*, carefully taught from his childhood upwards that his advancement in life will be at least as dependent upon his careful observance of these formalities as upon any individual merit he may display in the course of his actual service, passes the chief portion of his existence in a black tail-coat and trousers, white cravat and lemon-kid gloves. Pale yellow has always been preferred, in Germany, to lilac or pure white for "gloves of ceremony," I know not why. The primrose-coloured "hand-shoe," in connection with evening dress, is as obsolete in England as

the triple waistcoat or the stiffened shirt-frill; it is extremely rare in France, Italy, and Spain, where a few provincial mayors and such like social oddities still cling to it with touching constancy; the Russian Tchinovnik knows it not, nor, for the matter of that, does the typical Turkish Effendi, who affects pearl-grey gloves, as irreproachable in fit and fashion as his superlatively lacquered boots. But throughout the Fatherland it is still considered the correct thing, as an accessory to the crepuscular costume prescribed by etiquette for the paying of morning calls, congratulatory, condolatory, commemorative or generally complimentary.

Another essential element of success in the official career is the practice of bowing, regulated by a nice knowledge of *nuances* in bureaucratic rank, seniority and precedence. Bowing, in Germany, is by no means the mere outward and visible sign of an instinctive courtesy, as in other countries; it is rather a carefully cultivated branch of social science—a department of *Bildung*, one of those many-sided German words (like *Gemüthlichkeit*) which the children of Teut profess to understand but are unable to explain to the perplexed alien. Its fundamental principles are readily mastered. Not so its by-laws, ingeniously adapted to all manner of situations liable to accrue during conventional intercourse between persons of different stations. It may be taken as indefeasible that the inferior, whilst approaching the superior, must execute three several bows at as many successive stages of his advance. Upon taking leave, however, he should always contrive to exceed, by one, the number of inclinations elicited by his withdrawal

from the recipient of his visit. No matter how many times the latter, in a very paroxysm of "*Bildung*," may salute him, he must—if he would flourish and prosper in worldly things—be able to say to himself with exulting confidence, as he descends the stairs, "The balance of bows is one, if not two, in my favour!" Only long experience and incessant observation will teach a rising man how often he ought to bow whilst actually engaged in conversation with a person in whose good graces he is desirous to establish himself firmly; or will familiarise him with such delicate distinctions as are involved in the relative depths of a bow suggested by a Minister's joke and of one suitable to the acknowledgment of a moral reflection emanating from a Councillor of the Third Class. But even these fine *nuances*, felt rather than defined, become speedily perceptible realities to an intelligent man, when he makes them the study of his predilection, at a time of life when his apprehensions are keenest and his receptiveness knows no limit. Were I myself of the German persuasion, the father of a son verging upon manhood, whose official career I yearned to further by every honourable means available to him, I would make it my business, upon the eve of his reception into some departmental bureau as an unpaid supernumerary, to impart to him a modicum of excellent advice, in something like the following terms:—"Be invariably deferential in your demeanour towards those set over you in authority, be it even by a hair's-breadth of bureaucratic rank. Never forget to address everybody with whom you may have to do by his or her official predicate or title of courtesy. In exchanging salutes

with your superiors, always bow to them once more than they shall bow to you. Be chronically swallow-tailed and white chokery; guard yourself prudently against innovations in the hue of your gloves, remembering ever that pale yellow is hallowed by ancient usage. Devote all your leisure hours to complimentary calls; and"—here a father's feelings might cause my voice to falter—"you will assuredly get on in life, a credit to yourself and honour to your family. Some thirty years hence, by strict adhesion to these rules of conduct, you will in all probability have become a Councillor of some sort, with a copious income of at least £180 per annum, four or five decorations, and a right to a pension of three-fifths of your salary. You will be irrevocably entitled to the predicate of 'Highwellborn,' besides your official title; an ornament to the age you live in, and a shining example to future generations. Bless you, my son! A glorious and lucrative future is before you. Visit, and you will succeed; bow, and you shall prosper; wear a tail-coat in the days of your youth, and when you are old you shall sit under the shade thereof!"

With these vexatious and time-consuming incumbencies hanging chronically over their heads, it is not to be wondered at that the smaller fry of the Berlinese bureaucracy and liberal professions should regard the marvellous growth of the German capital as a serious grievance. Whilst that part of the Ursine City inhabited by *Honoratioren* was no larger than the parish of St. Marylebone, they could get through no end of formal visits, with the aid of a sixpenny droshky, in two or three hours of a half-holiday. Now that the respectable

quarter of Berlin covers nearly as much ground as Edinburgh, a complimentary pilgrimage of the class above alluded to falls but little short of martyrdom. As the distances to be traversed have increased through the rapid construction of new streets, squares, and crescents, so has the locomotion tariff been raised, slowly and cautiously, under the paternal superintendence of a police *régime*, the ubiquitous finger of which is kept pertinaciously inserted in every pie of Prussian private enterprise. Time was, "when this old hat was new," that the Berlin droshky was the cheapest, as well as the worst hireable vehicle in Europe. Its supremacy in the latter respect, I am bound to say, is still unshaken by improvement, either in construction or in the quality of its motive power. But it has fallen from its high estate as the concrete realisation of a thrifty mind's ideal. All day long it is dearer than a St. Petersburg droshky; and from 11 P.M. to 6 A.M. it is nearly twice as expensive as a London cab, which, as far as comfort and speed are concerned, bears about the same relation to it as does a first-class carriage of the Limited Mail to a bullock van of what is technically termed a "Parliamentary slow." A government clerk at thirty pounds a year, although invested with the haughty and impressive title of Regierungs-Kanzlist—or Ministerial-Conzipist—which he is justifiably ambitious to exchange for an even more dignified denomination—cannot well afford to disburse six or seven shillings once or twice a week for transport, even in the immediate interests of his possible promotion. Scarcely more feasible to him is the performance of his visiting rounds on foot, not to speak of the difficulty he

experiences, being a humble subordinate, in obtaining leave to absent himself from his office during society's canonical hours. I cannot help hoping that the physical extension of Berlin, unattended as it is by any coincident increment in the incomes of State *employés*, will ere long strike a death-blow at an ancient but humiliating practice, more honoured in the breach than in the observance. And I look forward without a pang of anticipatory sorrow to the period when a tail-coat, worn in broad daylight by any Berlinese save a waiter, will be as striking a rarity in the German capital as a student without a gashed face, or an Assessor absolutely emancipate from the thraldom of spectacles.

CHAPTER III.

LIFE IN BERLIN—UNDER THE LINDEN—PRUSSIAN ORDERS OF CHIVALRY—GERMAN PATRONYMICS AND PREDICATES.

EVERY European capital of the first class, excepting London, has its street of streets, a recognised *résumé* of its manners and customs, chief characteristics and salient peculiarities, to which thoroughfare natives and foreigners alike naturally gravitate at certain hours of the day, partly because "it is the right thing to do," partly because a street of this peculiar class really offers exceptional attractions in the way of sight-seeing, novelties, and social *rencontres*. The monster metropolis, with its four millions of inhabitants and half score of postal districts, each a mighty city in itself, stretching out their suburban tentacles towards the hearts of four counties, is too vast and many-sided to admit of anything like typification in a single street. Cornhill, Pall Mall, Fleet Street, the Strand, Regent and Oxford Streets are one and all representative thoroughfares, concretely expressing to the minds of many men the abstract idea of London. In all probability ten foreigners of twelve who have visited the British capital, if asked which of the great London streets had impressed them as being the most obviously typical of London life, would unhesitatingly reply "Regent Street;" and yet I

have no doubt that there are thousands of born Londoners who do not even know that gay thoroughfare by name, and tens of thousands who have never in their lives trodden its broad and crowded pavements. To a certain class of English society Pall Mall is *the* London street *par excellence;* others are accustomed to assign that representative pre-eminence to Bond Street, St. James's Street, Mile End, Ratcliff Highway, *que sais-je?* But it is beyond question that no individual street of our metropolis stands in the same relation to Londoners of every rank, occupation, and pursuit as that connecting the Boulevard des Italiens with all Parisians, the Ring-strasse with all Viennese, the Corso with the Romans, the Nevskoï Prospect with the inhabitants of St. Petersburg, or (to come to the subject with which I now propose to deal), the Linden Avenue, known to its *habitués* of all nationalities as "Unter den Linden," with the Berlinese.

The Linden Avenue, like the magnificent Ring-strasse of Vienna, is really a stately Boulevard, divided into several sections for the respective accommodation of carriages, business vehicles, and pedestrians by long lines of lime-trees, from which it derives its special designation. It was originally laid out and planted by Queen Sophie Dorothee, that notable lady immortalised in Carlyle's great biography, who gave her name to a once fashionable *quartier* of the Prussian capital, and was so eminent an innovator in landscape-gardening, horticulture, dairy-farming, etc., that her name still lives in the popular memory as that of a beneficent busybody who revolutionised a whole host of antique beliefs and practices,

greatly to the benefit of the Residenz and its immediate neighbourhood. "Under the Linden" is nearly three-quarters of a mile in length, extending in an absolutely straight line from the Pariser-Platz—a square frame of stately palaces in which the colossal Brandenburg Gate is nobly set—to the Lust-Garten and Schloss-Platz, two vast open spaces merging into one another on the left bank of the Spree and surrounded on three sides by buildings of considerable historical and artistic importance. At present the vista which may be said to close the eastern end of the Linden is a highly unsatisfactory one, from a picturesque point of view. It consists of the Dom, or Cathedral, an ignoble, shabby, dirty-looking hybrid sort of church, with a nondescript body surmounted by a clumsy cupola, of which the Berlinese have been heartily ashamed ever since their city obtained promotion to the rank of German capital. But ere long this repulsively ugly building will vanish from its lodgment on the Campo Santo of "Modern Athens," to be replaced by a magnificent mausoleum of white marble, in which the ashes of all the Brandenburg Electors, Prussian Kings, and Hohenzollern Princes, now provisionally reposing in the vaults of the hideous Dom, are to be finally deposited. When this mausoleum shall be completed, it will be open to some poet of the future to describe the Linden Avenue as a "glorious road from Victory to Death;" for the famous bronze group of the conquering goddess, perched high upon her war-chariot, and urging her fiery steeds in the direction of the Royal Palace, already crowns the summit of the Brandenburg Gate at the western extremity of the Avenue, and the

eastern end will then, to all practical intents and purposes, be terminated by the gorgeous tomb of the princely warriors and statesmen whose descendant now sits upon the German throne. Great advancement has fallen to the lot of the Hohenzollerns. Frederick, Burgrave of Nuremberg, came to Berlin as Warden of the Wendish Marches, then peopled by a few hundred thousand Slav peasants slightly leavened by Saxon immigration. William, King of Prussia, is also Emperor of a realm numbering forty-five millions of inhabitants, and occupying the foremost rank, power, and prestige amongst Continental Powers. The bones of these two remarkable men will one day be housed under the same roof, together with those of all the intermediate Hohenzollerns who, each in turn, have contributed something to the main achievement of their gifted, valiant, and persistent race —the building up of a barren Marquisate into the most potent Empire of modern times.

Amongst the historically celebrated houses that have survived modern improvements in this celebrated thoroughfare is the old palace in which Frederick the Great resided during the latter years of his life, when State affairs or Court ceremonies called him to Berlin from his favourite Potsdam *villeggiatura*, *sans souci*. During the last three reigns it has been utilised as an official abode for the Commandant of the Berlin garrison; a few years ago it was furbished up at the expense of the Emperor, to the destruction of all its antique features, and at present differs but little from the pattern Berlin mansion, flat-roofed and stucco-fronted. Near it stands the palace occupied as a town-house by the Crown

Prince, a handsome building erected for Frederick the Great, upon the occasion of his marriage, by order of his eccentric father, and as an outward and visible sign of paternal forgiveness. In this palace also lived the present Emperor, when Heir Apparent to the Prussian throne, and it is destined, probably at no very distant date, to become the dwelling of Prince William of Prussia, when the venerable Kaiser's good grey head shall be laid to rest in an honoured grave. A little further on in a westerly direction is situate the Royal Palace, nearly opposite to which commence the long lines of lime-trees constituting the veritable Linden Avenue, which, strictly speaking, is bounded at one end by Rauch's noble equestrian statue of Frederick II., and at the other by a gigantic gas-lamp adorning the centre of the Pariser Platz. The Opera House, Arsenal, University, Grand Guard-House (a perfect replica of a celebrated Greek temple), Museum, and Royal Castle all stand without these limits; but they nevertheless are so closely associated with "Unter den Linden" in the popular mind that they may be said to belong to that grand and impressive thoroughfare, which can boast of no such fine specimens of architecture, severe or ornate, within its own technical precincts. It is, in fact, for the most part fringed on either side with commonplace houses of modern aspect, the ground floors of which, with few exceptions, are tenanted by shopkeepers, restaurateurs, and cafetiers.

But this more prosaic section of the Linden has, within my remembrance, witnessed memorable sights and been the scene of terrible events. From a second floor

window of one of its southern buildings, eight years ago, Nobiling fired the double shot that all but slew William I., whose life had been attempted by crazy Hœdel, a few weeks previously, only a hundred yards or so from the spot upon which the philosophical assassin's missiles struck him down. Hard by, where the Kleine Mauer Strasse debouches into the Linden, Prince von Bismarck had a narrow squeak for existence at the hands of young Blind, not many months before I first made the personal acquaintance of the eminent German statesman. It was not, however, till the autumn of 1867 that one night, during a long tête-à-tête with which he honoured me in his old house in the Wilhelm Strasse, he gave me a detailed and graphic account of his *rencontre* with Blind, and placed my finger upon the bony excrescence which had developed itself on one of his lower ribs in consequence of the injury inflicted thereon by a bullet discharged from Blind's revolver at a moment when its muzzle was in actual contact with the Chancellor's body. "I owe my extraordinary escape from death," he observed, "partly to the solidity and hardness of my rib, and partly to the strength of my muscles. Blind had scarcely raised his pistol when I grappled with him, and got his right arm in a tight grip, which I never relaxed until he was secured by a patrol of the Guard. Of the five shots he fired whilst we were struggling, only this one," pointing to his side, "took effect; for I had my wits about me, and managed to keep his pistol-hand bent outwards, except just at the end of the tussle, when he succeeded in turning the barrel full upon my body. But the bullet, though it stung me so sharply that I thought

it had gone clean through me, only glanced off my rib. I ran a much more imminent risk from the fair-play instincts of a honest Prussian Guardsman than I did from that foolish lad's revolver. You see, he was a smallish fellow, and I am rather a big one. Whilst we were wrestling, my hat fell off, and I suppose my bald head proved a tempting object to one of the soldiers, who ran up to see what was the matter, hearing the reports of the pistol; for this worthy fellow, perceiving a tall man, as he fancied, ill-treating a short youth, clubbed his rifle, and would assuredly have brought the butt end down with a crash upon my bare pate had I not caught sight of his attitude in time to shout out, 'Hold on! I am Bismarck'—upon which he dropped his weapon in a much greater fright than even my own."

No foreigner who has mixed freely in Berlin society can have failed to be strongly impressed by the importance attached therein to the possession of those outward and visible signs of inward desert and latent merit, hight decorations. In Court, commercial, and artistic circles alike, these symbols of Royal favour meet the eye in infinite variety of shape and colour, and are, in ninety-nine cases of a hundred, highly prized by their wearers of either sex; for, be it parenthetically remarked, the conferment of Orders, formerly a male monopoly, has of late years been extended so as to comprehend members of the female persuasion. The *raison d'être* of a decoration, of course, is that it represents a State or national recognition of conspicuous virtue or dutifulness in the subject—a recognition, moreover, emanating from the

very Fountain of Honour itself, and stamping its recipient, as it were, with an authoritative and indisputable brand of sovereign gratitude and approbation. That the cross, star, or riband, displayed upon a manly breast or snowy shoulder, is not invariably significant of that which it was originally intended to mean is but an inevitable consequence of the circumstance that Orders of Chivalry and Merit are human institutions, and therefore intrinsically fallible. In Germany they are more abundant, various, and susceptible of minute distinctions in the manner of their bestowal than in any other country of the universe. It would be rash to infer from this fact that the Fatherland is the favourite abode of the virtues, or that the standard of German meritoriousness is abnormally high. I do not, pray observe, deny that such is the case; but the experiences that have accrued to me during many years' residence in Prussia, the Paradise of decoration-hunters, incline me to believe that the children of Teut are neither better nor worse than their fellow-men of other nationalities. Supply, according to politico-economists, is created by demand. Admitting this axiom to be one of those "eternal truths" that we read of in Carlyle, it may be fairly assumed that the Germans enjoy a special dispensation in the matter of Orders because their inborn craving for this class of honorific distinction is more vehement and insatiable than that experienced by any other variety of the Caucasian race.

That their philosophers and humourists have, for the last century and a half, solemnly deplored or comically derided the profusion with which crosses and ribands

are conferred by the Prussian State in reward of real or imaginary services, is nothing to the purpose. Neither sage nor satirist, when the possibility of obtaining such a symbol of honour may have accrued to him, has ever been known to reject his chance or evade his Destiny. One of the most popular proverbs in the Realm of the Black and Red Eagles is the following:—"There are three afflictions from which no well-conducted Prussian can hope to escape; Death, the tax-gatherer, and the Fourth Class of the Red Eagle." The point of this jest is somewhat blunted by the fact that no well-conducted Prussian dreams of avoiding the conferment of the decoration in question, or is, indeed, when once possessed of it, in the least averse to sporting it in public upon every occasion affording him the slenderest pretext for so doing. It is inferentially reproachful to a man in middle life, occupying a respectable position in bureaucracy, commerce, the liberal professions, arts and sciences, that, being a Prussian born, he should be utterly forlorn of Knightly Orders; wherefore, if he cannot succeed by hook or by crook in obtaining the minor insignia of one or other of these distinctions from the sovereign of his own country, he turns his attention to "foreign" monarchs, of whom there are still a couple of dozen or so within the territorial limits of the Fatherland, and brings what hole and corner influence he can command to bear upon some petty potentate with a persistency which, as a matter of fact, is generally crowned by success. Failing obtention of the Prussian Red Eagle, a more reluctant bird than the above quoted proverb would seem to indicate, the irresistible aspirant to chivalric honours will proudly clasp

to his bosom the Blue Cuckoo or other heraldic monster of Reuss-Greiz-Schleiz-Lobenstein-Gera, if he can get it; and, having by the payment of a trifling fee secured his own native ruler's gracious permission to accept and wear the insignia of that illustrious Order, will cause his new title to be engraved upon his visiting cards, in some such florid formula as this:—"Mr. Upper Privy Architectural Councillor Johann Schmidt, Knight of the Transparent Princely Reuss-Greiz-Schleiz-Lobenstein-Geranian Blue Cuckoo Order of the Fourth Class with the Riband." Having by this act—at least in his own opinion—achieved the goal of a just and noble ambition, he is tolerably happy until it occurs to him that his life, in his social position, is but a hollow mockery whilst unblessed by possession of the Cross (Third Class, Civil Division) of the Orange-Tawny Woodpecker of Saxe-Meiningen-Hildeburghausen-Jülich-Cleven-Bergen, upon the Diaphanous Duke of which polytitular realm he has some more or less genuine or spurious claim for All-Serenest recognition. Beset by this fresh craving, he indefatigably stalks the Woodpecker until its miniature effigy, in metal and enamel, hangs by the side of the Cuckoo from his button-hole; and so, his appetite for distinction growing by what it feeds upon, he perseveres in his crusade until half the birds and beasts that went into the Ark are suspended in glistening array from parti-coloured ribands sewn on to the front of his coat.

Next to Prince von Bismarck, who is Knight Grand Cross of sixty-four Orders—more than half the total existing number of such distinctions—the most lavishly decorated German I ever met was one W. Hoff, the patentee of a

surpassingly Hygeian liquid yclept "Extract of Malt," whose elaborate collection of Imperial, Royal, Ducal and Princely Crosses serves as a highly-telling advertisement for the nutritive and refreshing tonic from which he derives an uncommonly comfortable income. Hoff, in his turn, was all but equalled as a champion crusader by Wertheim, another acquaintance of mine, the inventor of a fire-proof safe that appears to have asserted irrefutable claims upon all the sovereigns of Continental Europe for recognition of its merits in the shape of chivalric conferment. Some years ago my old friend Dr. Giskra, at that time a Minister of State in Vienna, asked me to dinner one day, to meet a number of Austrian commercial celebrities. I was amongst the earliest arrivals, and, whilst standing near the drawing-room door, chatting to that most eccentric of bankers, Baron Henikstein, I heard a faint tinkling, as of fairy sledge bells, upon the landing outside. "What may that strange sound be?" I inquired of my companion, a living encyclopædia of Viennese oddities. "That," gravely replied the Baron, "is the jingling of Wertheim's decorations. He wears them strung upon golden chains all over his chest—not the fire-proof one—and, as you hear, the chimes rung by his crosses announce his advent from afar."

The astute and thrifty Kings who have reigned over Prussia for the last hundred and eighty-six years, finding scraps of riband and morsels of metal to be stimulants to exertion and rewards of merit at once agreeably cheap and eminently suited to the temper of the Prussian mind, wisely founded several Orders of Chivalry, and more-

over introduced such copious varieties of *nuances* into the praxis of their bestowal that I have been positively assured, by the highest living authority upon this particular subject, that no fewer than seventy-two distinct gradations of conferment are comprehended in the potentialities of distinction available for dispensation to his subjects by William I., German Emperor and King of Prussia. Each of these *nuances* represents something quite definite and concrete in the way of distinction to its recipient, and is granted or withheld by its donor in consonance with a nice apprehension of the exact degree of merit justifying or invalidating its conferment. The Aulic Councillor of thirty years' service who, deeming himself entitled to the Third Class of the Red Eagle *with the riband*, receives the Cross of that Class *without the riband*—or, worse still, the Third Class of the Crown Order—feels himself unduly snubbed, and curses the hour in which he entered the service of so ungrateful and ungenerous a State. Should he, however, find a small enamelled wreath of mimic oak-leaves attached, as well as the anticipated *Schleife*, or riband, to his "Rothen-Adler Orden Dritter Klasse," his breast expands with honest pride and joyful emotion, and his heart beats high with patriotic affection for the just and magnanimous monarch who has evinced such accurate appreciation of his excellent deserts.

Of these elastic and comprehensive Prussian Orders, nine in number (including the Order of Louisa, exclusively conferred upon ladies), their history, characteristics and peculiarities, I subjoin some noteworthy details. Their titles in due order of their precedence, dignity and

rank, as prescribed by Royal regulation, are the Black Eagle, Red Eagle, Order of Merit, Crown, Iron Cross, St. John, House-Order of Hohenzollern, Swan, and Louisa. As I have already stated above, they are susceptible of conferment in seventy-two several and different ways.

The first of Prussian Orders of Chivalry is the Black Eagle. This supreme distinction—supreme, that is to say, from the Prussian point of view, for in European estimation of such institutions it ranks "with and after" the Garter, Golden Fleece and Annunziata—was founded by Frederick, third Kurfürst of that name and first King of Prussia, in the year 1701, when the "expensive Herr" raised the "Marquisate of Brandenburg" to the rank of a kingdom. By the original statutes of this Order, the number of its Knights—of Prussian birth, of course, exclusive of members of the Hohenzollern family—was limited to thirty. To the best of my knowledge and belief, those statutes have never suffered any alteration since the date of their promulgation. Consequently, Knights of the Black Eagle are as rare in Germany as Knights of the Garter in England; and a Prussian subject must indeed have rendered extraordinary services to his country ere he can hope to qualify for the conferment of this exalted decoration. It does not, however, like the Maria Theresa, Leopold and Iron Crown of Austria, or the St. Stephen of Hungary, endow its recipient with nobility, transmissible to his heirs; nor does this particular shortcoming detract in any way from its value, for the simple reason that any person, not of noble birth and hereditary title, has about the same chance of

obtaining the Black Eagle as has Mr. Spurgeon of election to the dignity of Roman Pontiff.

With the view of imparting uncommon prestige and exclusiveness to this Order, its Royal founder ordained that it should be worn alone, thereby inferring that no other decoration was worthy of occupying a place by its side upon a Prussian breast. But Frederic the First, one of the vainest men who ever lived, was led into an infringement of his own ordinances by a splendid windfall that came to him in the shape of a British Garter, a distinction but rarely bestowed by English Sovereigns upon foreign Monarchs in the eighteeenth century, and one to the obtention of which he could never have ventured to aspire had he remained in the chrysalidic stage of a Brandenburg Elector, instead of achieving full butterfly development as a Prussian King. The worthy gentleman was so highly flattered by the unexpected honour conferred upon him by his "cousin of England," and entertained, moreover, such a strong natural predilection for gorgeous effect in the way of external ornamentation, that he caused the Star of the Black Eagle, which he himself bore permanently upon his left breast, to be surrounded by a facsimile of the Garter, bearing its device "*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*" Ever afterwards, until the day of his death, he wore the *crachat* in which the two exalted decorations were thus blended. Every subsequent King of Prussia upon whom the Garter has been bestowed has followed his ancestor's example in this particular respect. The present German Emperor, the Crown Prince and Prince William, all three Knights of the Garter, wear Stars of the Black Eagle bound

round by an enamel imitation of the Blue Riband; and the same amalgamation of the double insignia is perpetuated upon the ceiling of the apartment known as "Frederic the First's Chamber" in the Altes Schloss in Berlin.

These curious ana of the chief Prussian Order became known to me under circumstances of somewhat exceptional interest. On the second evening after the proclamation, in the Salle des Glaces at Versailles, of William of Hohenzollern, King of Prussia, as German Emperor, I received a command to dine with the Crown Prince at his quarters in the pretty little villa "Les Ombrages," which His Royal Highness occupied throughout the investment and siege of Paris. With the solitary exception of General Beauchamp Walker, the British Military Commissioner at that time attached to the Royal Head Quarters, I was the only Englishman amongst the Crown Prince's guests upon the occasion in question; an accident to which I attribute the gratifying circumstance that my august host distinguished me more than once in the course of the evening by conversing with me at considerable length. He was wearing undress uniform, as it was an informal "friendly" party; and after dinner, whilst we were smoking and chatting together—I remember that he had just shown me a remarkably handsome meerschaum pipe, carved for him by the Crown Princess just before he started upon the French campaign—he suddenly thrust his right hand into the breast of his dragoon tunic, and, pulling out three glittering jewels, called my attention to them, saying "I always wear these about me, even when no

ceremonial occasion requires their display. One, as you see, is the jewel of our chief Order, another that of the Fleece; the third is the George. I am very proud of my Garter, for I owe the dearest thing in life to me, my beloved wife, to the country whose patron saint is also the patron saint of that Order. I regard it as of good augury; so much so, that the day before yesterday, when my father was proclaimed Emperor, as you saw and heard, I put on the Garter itself when I dressed to attend the ceremony. It could not be seen by anybody, because I was in full cavalry uniform, with high boots reaching above the knee, which completely hid it. But I had it on; and I don't mind confessing to you that I should have deemed it an unlucky omission had I forgotten to don it upon so important—so momentous an occasion in the history of our House." Immediately after uttering these gracious words, so richly fraught with most delicate flattery to the feelings of every Englishman, the Crown Prince pointed out to me the peculiarity in the jewel of the Black Eagle, above alluded to, and explained to me the origin of the curious blending that had taken place in its combined insignia—how Edward's jesting motto had come to frame and environ Frederic's sober device of "*Suum cuique tribuito.*"

The Black Eagle, I know not why, fell into abeyance after the death of Frederic I. Neither Frederic William I., the "Potsdam-Corporal," nor Frederic II., the "Protestant Hero," held it in high esteem; consequently they steadfastly abstained from conferring it upon those whom they delighted to honour. Nor did Frederic William II., nicknamed "The Fat King," distribute it to his Court

favourites or confidential councillors. In the year 1810, however, the present Emperor's father, Frederic William III., issued an entirely new set of "Regulations for the Orders of the Prussian Monarchy"—which regulations practically resuscitated the moribund "Black Eagle." They also classified the Red Eagle, settled the organisation of the Johanniter (Order of St. John), then a Prussian institution, but since extended to the Austrian Empire, and founded the "Order and Coronation Festivity," which has for the last seventy-six years been celebrated on every successive 18th of January. Upon this anniversary, I may mention, the Sovereign holds a Chapter of the Black Eagle in State, and all the *décorés* of the past twelve months dine with him in the White Marble Hall of the old Castle at Berlin. As many as eighteen hundred have been known to sit down to table at one of these banquets. I was present at one, a few years ago, and the number of guests on that occasion considerably exceeded fifteen hundred; some notion of the scale upon which the Royal Household is kept up may be gathered from the fact that over five hundred Court lackeys in gala livery were in attendance upon that occasion.

The Order of the Red Eagle was originally an appanage of the House of Anspach, but came by inheritance into that of Hohenzollern in the year 1792. It has four classes, each of which is susceptible of bestowal in many several ways. As a military decoration, it is highly valued, and conferred with extreme nicety of discrimination, each of its *nuances* being, to the apprehension of those trained in such matters, plainly signi-

ficant of the exact degree of merit in its recipient which it is meant to recognise and reward. Thus, by a glance at the sort of Red Eagle adorning the breast of a Prussian army officer, one is enabled to reckon up the estimation in which his services are held by his Sovereign—of course, taking his actual rank into account as a factor in the problem. For instance, if one see a full captain decorated with the Third Class, one may be sure that he is an uncommonly smart and steady officer, who has, moreover, especially distinguished himself either in the field or in special service connected with some scientific department. Should his Cross be "mit der Schleife," that is, supplemented by a riband of a certain breadth, his merits and feats must have been indeed remarkable; if it be surrounded by a mimic oak-wreath ("mit Eichenlaube"), he has certainly a great future before him; and two crossed swords suspended to it by a tiny ring ("mit Schwertern am Ringe") indicate that its possessor must be a very military phœnix. Thus do Prussians wear their orders "with a difference" as Shakespeare would have defined this ingenious contrivance for the nice repartition of Honour by its Fountain; and the "differences" in question run through the several classes of the Red Eagle, each having its distinct and definite meaning, perfectly apparent not only to the recipient of a decoration, but to his military comrades and to society at large, "well up" in all the *finesses* of Prussian honorific badges. Conferred upon a civilian, not in the immediate employment of the State, the Red Eagle lacks any special significance, because it is usually given rather by favour than for merit. If a private

citizen, being tolerably wealthy and in good odour with some influential personage, conduct himself unobjectionably for thirty or forty years, he may reasonably aspire to the Fourth Class of the Red Eagle, nor, in nine cases out of ten, will his aspirations be disappointed. But the Grand Cross of this Order is a tremendous distinction, sparsely granted, and only second in dignity to the Collar of the Black Eagle, which, by the way, is worn by no fewer than four members of the British Royal Family—the Prince of Wales and Dukes of Edinburgh, Connaught and Cambridge—not counting Prince Christian of Schleswig Holstein, who is married to an English Princess, and received the first of Prussian Orders upon the occasion of his niece's marriage to the Heir Presumptive to the German throne. Amongst illustrious Latter-Day Frenchmen upon whom the Black Eagle has been conferred were the late Emperor Napoleon III. and Adolphe Thiers. The Duke of Magenta and the Count de St. Vallier are at the present time entitled to wear its broad orange riband and dark blue and golden jewel.

One of the most curious characteristics of Berlin society is that every person belonging to it, except unmarried women, and male minors who have not matriculated at the University, has some sort of title by which he or she expects to be addressed, as well in social parlance as upon the outside of an envelope. This quaint fashion is not peculiar to the German capital; it prevails throughout the Fatherland and is even more punctiliously observed in some of the Southern provincial cities than in the more prosaic and practical Northern towns.

But it makes a more ludicrous impression upon the foreigner, perhaps, in Berlin than elsewhere, because the average intelligence of the Modern Athenians is unquestionably of a higher standard than that of the Suabian Pumpernicklers or Bavarian Schweiniglers; and culture, many-sidedness and cosmopolitanism seem comically out of keeping with a custom which is the outcome of petty vanity and paltry ambition. Every man you meet or have to do with in the every-day transactions of life, no matter whether he belongs to the upper, middle or lower strata of society, is endowed with a handle to his name; and if you fail to use that handle, which sticks out so prominently that it cannot escape your notice, you may be sure that its owner will regard you with disfavour and disdain, as one unacquainted with polite usages and totally forlorn of "Bildung." Thus, the tradesman who provides your family with its daily bread, should you find it necessary to address him remonstratively on the subject of short weight or an overdose of alum in your morning-roll, is sure to take offence unless his full title of "Mr. Master-Baker" be duly inscribed upon your communication. If he happen to be one of the many privileged beings entitled by special diploma to supply any member of the reigning family with plum-cakes or tops-and-bottoms, you will have to add the prefix of "Mr. Royal Court-Purveyor" to his more purely professional predicate, or brave his just indignation. In its totality, and expressed in the German idiom, his title will occupy two lines of close writing; unless, indeed, the honorific distinction of a Commercial Councillorship should have rewarded the

excellence of his crust and crumb, in which case three lines will scarcely describe him with complete exhaustiveness. But stay; he may be a Town-Councillor to boot, if he be tolerably well off and disinterestedly minded to meddle in his fellow-citizens' affairs. Should this be so, you may readily cover the entire back of an envelope, with the exception of the small square space reserved in one corner for the postage-stamp, with the record of his dignities; and even then it will be odds upon your having omitted some essential titular distinction.

As I said before, everybody, from Prince to Peasant, from Duke to Dustman, has his title and insists upon its recognition. Whatever it may be it is invariably preceded by an introductory "Mr.," in itself a levelling and democratic designation, like the French "Monsieur." The highest officer in the army is addressed as "Mr. Field-Marshal;" the lowest as "Mr. Corporal." It is equally the correct thing to speak of a nobleman as "the Mr. Count" or of a hangman as "the Mr. Sharp-Judge" (Scharfrichter). If a private person, living upon an income derived from landed property, happens to lack an absolutely distinctive title, he must be addressed, according to the nature of his territorial tenure, as "Mr. Great-Estate-Proprietor" or "Mr. Knight's-Estate-Proprietor." Should, however, his means be in the nature of dividends upon government stock, railway scrip, &c., his proper predicate will be "Herr Rentier," which may be rendered in English, "Mr. Income-Possessor." By that title, if he be your friend, he will expect to be invited to your house and to be introduced to your other guests. It does not, how-

ever, convey itself by social convention to his wife, as does almost every other class or professional predicate. This is particularly hard on the spouses of some wealthy gentlemen who, having no special occupation and being content to abstain from the performance of any public function whatsoever, are, from the German social point of view, nobodies. It is, however, open to the better-half of such a low-minded nonentity, satisfied with grovelling in obscure, unhonoured comfort, to style herself "Mrs. Private Person"—*Germanice*, Frau Privatiere, a title which, to English ears, has quite a romantic flavour of piracy, letters-of-marque, buried treasure and the Spanish Main.

But little joy accrues to the well-regulated German female soul from the right to sport so tamely indefinite a prefix as Frau Privatiere. Better be "Mrs. Tribunal-Assessor," or "Mrs. Manufactory Inspector," than so meek a thing as "Mrs. Private Person." How blissful, on the other hand, are the feelings of a right-minded, self-respecting Teutonic matron who is entitled by the unwritten laws of social etiquette to exact from her dearest friends that they shall greet her as "Mrs. Upper Privy Government Councillor" or "Mrs. General Army Auditor!" The ladies whose husbands belong to what is known in Germany as the "Honoratioren" Class—that is to say, a sort of blended military, official and municipal hierarchy, consisting of persons holding rank of the higher sorts in careers recognised by the State, and about equivalent to the five upper categories of the Russian Tchin—are accustomed to meet with frequency at coffee-parties—afternoon affairs—given in succession

by the fair planets of that particular sidereal system. At these gatherings, some of which I have been privileged to attend in the character of a harmless and tolerably respectable alien, a liberal education in the unnumbered *nuances* of German titular observance, as precise as they are delicate, may be rapidly acquired by one who is at once attentive and retentive. The ladies are, as a rule, extremely voluble and perfectly up in the science of Predicates. There is no fear that any of them will fail to accost her neighbour with a correct recital of the exact official grade to which the latter has a real or honorary claim, or will condone any shortcomings with respect to her own official designation. *Suum cuique tribuito*, the device of the Black Eagle, is the fundamental principle underlying all the forms of intercourse current in these interchanges of hospitality between the fair members of the Honoratioren caste. To every coffee and cake-consuming dame is accorded full and punctilious recognition of her hierarchical quality and attributes—no more, no less, under terrible penalties of satirical comment, severe reproof, crushing condemnation, and even—but only in cases of hardened offenders—absolute ostracism. Privy-Councilloresses and Councilloresses likely to become Privy herd together at the "Kaffee-Gesellschaften;" so do Mrs. Colonels and Lieutenant-Colonels. There are dozens of such social divisions; each madly jealous of the one just above it, and yearning for promotion to a higher stratum. Certain Free-Lances, mostly young and of the male persuasion, are tolerated in three or four sets simultaneously, perhaps for some special diverting capacity, perhaps on account of some abnormal qualification in the

way of birth or official family connections. They usually carry gossip and scandal from one circle to another, and are put through their facings by the "leading ladies" of each several clique with appalling rigour and cross-examining ingenuity worthy of the Old Bailey in its palmiest Ballantine days.

The passion for titles is so deeply rooted in the German nature that Death itself avails not to extirpate it—at least, from the breasts of sorrowing survivors. One would think that it could matter but little to the bereaved relatives of a deceased Government clerk, tradesman or operative—say an engine-driver—whether or not the futile and insensate predicate by which it pleased him to designate himself during his sojourn in this distracted orb should be indelibly engraved upon his tombstone after death, or pompously set forth in the announcement of his demise printed in the "Hatch, Match, and Despatch" columns of the daily newspapers. It *does* matter, however, and a good deal at that, as may be conclusively demonstrated by the following advertisement—one of an enormous and grimly humorous class, in itself an inexhaustible source of amusement to the intelligent stranger within the German gates—which I translate literally from the original, published in a recent issue of a leading Berlin journal.

"Yesterday afternoon fell asleep softly in the Lord the widowed Mrs. Master Chimney-Sweep Pumpkin, born Rosalia Snipe. Her end was Peace! The mourning-ones who are left behind."

Amongst the minor "ills that flesh is heir to" probably the most vexatious is an absurd patronymic. Many

splendid intellectual potentialities have been crushed under the weight of a ridiculous family name, which has deterred men of great natural parts from courting publicity, and induced them to prefer an obscure, commonplace existence to meritorious notoriety, rendered intolerably irksome by the accidental heritage of an anachronism. Englishmen are peculiarly susceptible to the pain that accrues from congenital mishaps of this class. They are, as a rule, too proud and manly to rid themselves of a transmitted incubus by the simple expedient of changing a ludicrous name for one euphonious, picturesque, or even purely insignificant. They deem it their duty to "suffer and be strong" under a life-long infliction, the obvious remedy for which involves, as it were, a tacit confession of moral cowardice and an implied slur upon their progenitors; but they shrink from "facing the music" on the world's stage, saddled with an appellation that, to a certain extent, disqualifies them from being seriously considered by the audience. Such names as Hogsflesh, Muggins, and Snooks are inborn disabilities to poets, tragedians, musical composers, and aspirants to eminence in any æsthetic career. It has not yet been forgotten how, a score or so of years ago, when an Act was passed enabling Englishmen to change their names without incurring the expense and trouble of taking out Royal Letters, one of the first persons who profited by that legislative concession was a Mr. Bugg, who hastened to disencumber himself of his unsavoury patronymic by solemnly advertising in the columns of the *Times* that it was his will and pleasure to be thenceforth known to his friends, acquaintances and fellow-

citizens by the compound cognomen of Norfolk-Howard. Homeric laughter greeted this unconsciously humorous announcement; but when the public had had time to reflect how serious a calamity the name of Bugg had probably proved to its unfortunate owner ever since he emerged from swaddling-clothes, reasonable folk did not hesitate to admit that he had acted wisely in repudiating that ancestral abomination.

More comical and repulsive names are current in Germany than in any other European country; but Germans do not seem to suffer from the miseries of eccentric nomenclature as keenly as do Englishmen, Frenchmen, or even Italians. Perhaps their indifference in this regard springs partly from their natural shortcoming, as far as a sense of humour is concerned, and partly from the deep and solid self-satisfaction which is one of their national characteristics. However this may be, it is certain that they do not feel the pressure of absurd or revolting patronymics as we do, and are not hampered in their purposes or restrained in their ambitions by any considerations connected with the measure of ridicule or disgust to which they may be rendered liable by a misfortune for which they are, after all, in no way accountable. A glance over the pages of the Berlin Directory will enable any one acquainted with the German language to pick out hundreds of astonishingly incongruous names, owned by persons holding distinguished positions in the official, commercial, and artistic circles of the capital. No social class is exempt from this quaint affliction. Illustrious nobles are often as ridiculously named as the humblest proletary. For instance, one of

the most ancient baronial families in Prussia rejoices in the designation "Gatekeeper-of-Hell," and the name of the wealthiest Count in the German Empire, literally rendered into our vernacular, is "Handle of Thunder-Marrow." To our apprehension these patronymics are no whit less nonsensical and unfit for family use than the utterly plebeian "Bloodsausage," "Whitecamel," or "Twoyearoldwildboar," that abound in the Father-land; but Germans see nothing funny or uncommon in them, and are unfeignedly surprised when the intelligent foreigner sojourning in their midst ventures to hint that, in any other country, names so extravagantly incongruous would inevitably render life intolerable to their luckless possessors, by reason of the inexhaustible banter, chaff, and satirical comment they could not fail to suggest to social wags and comic journalists.

The majority of the more high-sounding and poetical names that meet the eye upon German shop-fronts, or in the advertising sheets of the Teutonic daily press, belongs to persons of Jewish extraction. Not more than a couple of centuries ago the German Israelite, as a rule, was forlorn of a family name. He was either known by a "front-name," supplemented by that of his father—as "Aaron-ben-David," or "Solomon-ben-Israel," or by some nickname owing its origin to the nature of his occupation, or perhaps to a conspicuous physical peculiarity. This vagueness in his denomination, and his errant commercial habits, enabled him to dodge the tax-gatherer, and gave the German administrative a good deal of trouble in dealing with him from a fiscal point of view. It was therefore resolved to make him dis-

tinctly identifiable by the simple process of compelling him to take a family name, stick to it during his own life, and transmit it by legal act of registration to his children. No restrictions were imposed upon him in the matter of choice, and his flowery Oriental instincts prompted him to select patronymics significant of things beautiful or noble in nature, of great provinces or stately cities, kingly birds and beasts, moral virtues, and picturesque thoughts. Hence the following names, proper to German Israelite families of all classes:—Valley of Lilies, Mountain-of-Roses, Stone-of-Honour, Silesian, Englishman, Warsaw, Viennese, Eagle, Lion, Whale, Honourable, Pious, Humility, Trust God, Peace-of-Countries, Rich-in-Virtue, Lovely-Home, Holiday-Evening, Mountain-of-Thanks, Ladies'-Praise, and many others as romantic or idealistic as the foregoing. Alike astute and artistic, the Jews of the Fatherland, under stern compulsion to establish their identity as ratepayers, bestowed upon themselves all the prettiest and noblest patronymics the German language could afford, leaving to their Christian compatriots the ugliest and most ignominious.

How amazingly prosaic were the suggestions occurring to the true-born German popular mind in the good old days of paternal government, when burghers and plebeians, theretofore to all legal intents and purposes nameless, were coerced into assuming distinctive family designations, may be gathered from the following specimens of German nomenclature, culled at random from the Berlin Directory and from a week's "Births, Betrothals, Marriages, and Deaths," published in the *Vossische Zeitung*:—Murder, Rage, Brawler (a clergyman), Wickedvillage

(an eminent pianoforte manufacturer), Cowardly (a commercial councillor), Wood-Devil (a popular musical composer), Cucumber, Falsehood, Hatred (a professor of theology), Beastcorner, Sourherring (a captain of Foot-Guards), Mustardlife, Scorn, Cat, Heathen, Porridgebelly, Goose-eye, Liversausage, Extortioner, Bullock's-meat, Hare'sleg, Squint, Giantcabbage, Shakehead, Littlebeast, Gizzard, Potsprinkler, Chitchatmountain, Buglife, and Scoundrel. The majority of these names reveal tolerably vulgar instincts in their devisers, and tell their own story to boot. They more or less indicate personal characteristics, pursuits, peculiarities, predilections, and proclivities; the circumstances attending their conception and adoption may, with but slight exercise of the imagination, be readily pictured in the mind's eye. But there be other by no means uncommon German names, so intrinsically eccentric, anomalous, and unreasonable, that it is scarcely possible to account to one's self for their origin or appropriation by sane human beings. What, for instance, can have been the motive prompting a son of Teut to call himself "Effervescentweather," "Doornail," or "Blistervillage"? From what queer fancies or odd incidents did such names as "Frothmountain," "Cat'selbow," "Panhandle," "Horsedeceiver," "Tigerstream," "Doubleflourish," "Scissorscorner," and "Dailybasin" derive their *raison d'être*? Every conjecture I have hitherto ventured respecting the genesis of these astounding compound irrelevancies has, I am bound to say, been utterly lacking in verisimilitude. Perhaps some of my readers may be more successful than myself in divining the

"unde derivatur" of such a perplexing "front-name" as, let us say, "Knuckle-hamlet." I cordially recommend it to their attention and research.

There is, indeed, an inexhaustible wealth of puzzledom in German names. Why, in the name of all that is august and illustrious, should the senior Royal Duke of the Fatherland, a near relative of our own Queen, and own brother to a deceased magnate whose statue adorns fair Geneva, have borne such a farcical title as "Brown, be silent"? Of what heinous offence had the capital of a flourishing little German Duchy been guilty that it should have been subjected to the perpetual punishment of so unpleasant a designation as "Bowel-Town"? "High-Taxer" may seem appropriate enough, as a descriptive family name, to the supreme ruler of Germany, but it is certainly open to objection as an incessant reminder to the German people of the least agreeable characteristic of that great and ancient House, whose venerable head now wears the Imperial crown.

The North Germans are not a funny people. Amongst their many splendid qualities, cheerfulness of temper cannot conscientiously be included, even by those who, like myself, are notoriously their admirers. If there be any latent humour in them, it rarely rises to the surface, and is exhibited quite unconsciously. It is only when the North Germans mean to be particularly earnest that they are, to the foreigner's apprehension at least, now and then comical. Their rare efforts to be the latter in good faith produce a very depressing effect upon the spirits of the intelligent alien. They have no cotemporary comic literature, and the laughter of their theatres

is derived from French sources. I do not suppose that the Spartans were jocular folk. Those Prussians of antiquity were probably even such grave, valorous, astute, and thrifty souls as are these modern Laconians of Deutschland. Perhaps the prevalence of high animal spirits in a nation is incompatible with its possession of qualities such as have enabled Prussia to achieve the extraordinary political and military successes which raised her, within the brief period of twelve years, from the rank of a third-rate kingdom to that of a first-class empire; and it is possible that a keen sense of humour, when a national characteristic, may interfere with the conception of great and perilous enterprises, or, at least, with their stern and unflinching execution. Nothing of the kind has deterred the Prussians from the doing of deeds which have made as deep and broad a mark upon European history as did the performances of Napoleon I. The few laughter-provoking anecdotes incidental to their great wars, such as that concerning Moltke's celebrated pound of snuff, or as the no less famous story of Waldersee and the cowskin, owe their humorousness to the vehemence of the contrast they present between the extreme insignificance of the respective articles constituting the foundations upon which their superstructure of ludicrous detail reposes, and the transcendent solemnity, resolution, and perseverance applied to the consideration and manipulation of those articles by the military administrative authorities—not to any intention of being funny, or even faintest apprehension of a comical aspect in their transactions, on the part of those authorities. In fact, as above pointed out, the Prussian is only

comical—and that infrequently—when he does not in the least intend to be so; and then chiefly by reason of the superlative gravity which he imports into ordinary and commonplace matters, as well as of the curious *naïveté* pervading many of his actions and utterances—a *naïveté* so quaintly out of keeping with the intrinsic seriousness and even prosaicism of his character, that it furnishes to his sayings and doings the comic element of which, lacking it, they would be utterly forlorn. The sharp contrasts and mirth-moving anomalies resulting from the clashing of these apparently irreconcilable characteristics of his are most conspicuously exhibited in the advertisement-sheets of his newspapers, inexhaustible sources of amusement to foreigners acquainted with the German language and susceptible of the ludicrous. In these printed chronicles of demand and supply, the North German unreservedly reveals his inner self to his fellow-countrymen. He has no concealments from society; he takes Teutonic humanity into his confidence with a child-like simplicity that is touching; the while his announcements are couched in a style so punctilious and a phraseology so elaborate as altogether to preclude any belief in their spontaneity. They are highly relishable literary nuts, of which the kernel is simplicity itself, whilst the shell is laboriously carved and ornamented.

Many curious strata of the German character are laid open to the inquiring eye in these advertisement sheets. One of the most remarkable is the German's fondness of publicity. Another is his insatiate passion for titular distinction. It may be that this proclivity is not inborn, but rather the outcome of the very hearty contempt for

idleness generally entertained in the Fatherland, which feeling generates a requirement, as it were, that everybody should quite distinctly and unmistakably *be something*, and prove it.

The "Familien-Nachrichten," which teem with these queer titles, are exhaustive of the chief acts in human life; they record not only births, deaths, and marriages, but betrothals to boot. When two persons of opposite sexes become engaged, the parents of the young lady advertise that fact, as well as the parties concerned—the latter in the following formula, "As betrothed ones, recommend themselves Albert Goat and Bertha Valley of Lilies." A somewhat startling feature of the "Births" announcements is that the papas are associated with the event notified, never the mammas; as, for instance, "Mr. Urban-Tribunal-Councillor Eagle-mountain, a son," or "Mr. Second-Lieutenant-on-the-Retired-List Greyhorsepenny, twins." This strange attribution I take to be a quite unconscious illustration of the systematic manner in which female influence is ignored throughout Germany. Children are set down to the father's side of the joint account; the mother's share in the very important function of their production is left unrecorded, except in cases where the male parent, unable to restrain his exultation with respect to the "happy event," advertises it himself in such terms as the following: "My dear wife Clara was safely delivered on the 2nd inst. The faithful God has given me a strong boy. Hallelujah!" In many of these announcements a comfortable familiarity with the Supreme Being is evinced, which leads one to hope that religion may not, after all,

be at such a discount in Prussia as it is alleged to be by the *Germania*.

Amazingly funny are the matrimonial advertisements, emanating from persons of both sexes, which adorn the columns of morning and evening papers alike. I am assured that they frequently lead to serious business; nothing can be conceived more ludicrous than their wealth of practical details, their single-hearted frankness (frequently overstepping the bounds of discretion), and their steady contemplation of "the main chance." Here is an excellent specimen, culled from a Government organ: "To the for-marriage-wishing.—A forty-two-year-old, not comely, but of easy temper, evangelical, and with-furniture-well-provided Royal-State-official, wishes earnestly with a tolerably young, of pleasing exterior and fair complexion, blue-eyed, in all domestic arrangements expert, with from £1,200 to £1,500 endowed, maiden or widow, an honourable connection together to hook. Ladies on this proposition amicably reflecting will most amiably their offers to Rhinoceros, at the Newspaper Expedition Office, send.

> May this advertisement soon prove potential,
> Answers, of course, are strictly confidential."

The more romantic feelings of this class of advertiser frequently break out in verse, as do the raptures of the young lover, before his betrothal has been notified to the public. They subside notably after that event, the calm bliss of *fiancés* in Germany much resembling that of married folk in England. Political or municipal perplexities, too, prompt some enthusiasts to rhythmical utterance in the advertisement-sheet. Declarations are

made, love-meetings arranged, through the same medium. "The dark-eyed, luxuriant-locked beauty who sat in stall 51, fourth row, of the Wallner Theatre, on Tuesday evening, and wept pearly tears over Anna Ivanovna's sorrows, is passionately entreated to communicate her honoured name to Ypsilon, a young Israelitish merchant in flourishing circumstances. Love, Respect, and Silence! At the editor's office." Some lovers indulge in feeble cryptograms. Their favourite organ is the *Kreuz-Zeitung*. It is an old and true adage that says "one half of the world knows not how the other half lives." No one can read through the "Beilagen" of a German journal —especially of the provincial variety—without becoming convinced that not 1 per cent. of mankind possesses the least knowledge or idea of what the other 99 per cent. want. If, as Sydney Smith maintained, the essence of humour be incongruity, German advertisements can scarcely fail to be regarded as the most inimitably comic compositions of the day. In what other class of publication, for instance, could we hope to find anything so ludicrous as the propounding of an affinity between music and cotton-spinning? This connection is calmly established in the following advertisement, extracted from a recent issue of the *Schlesische Zeitung*:—"A musician of the E flat clarionettist order, who can play the second violin or tenor, and a B trumpeter, who can play the double-bass, can be employed lastingly and securely in a town-band in Southern Germany. Special consideration and favour will be accorded to applicants who have already been employed in mechanical spinning-manufactories, and possess good testimonials as to their

thorough knowledge of both callings.—*Weberei und Musik.*"

The mania for investing German humanity with unmeaning or exaggerative titles is confined to no social class. It prevails throughout all ranks and grades of men and women, from the highest to the lowest. You buy your fruit of "Mr. Court-Supplier Borehard;" you are introduced at a dinner-party to "Mrs. Economy Councillor Hedgestake;" you pay your paving-rate to "Mr. Municipal-Taxes-Collector Lionstone." The Emperor himself, simplest and most unaffected of living German gentlemen as he is, does not enjoy immunity from the swollen and windy phraseology in which the Germans express their recognition of personal distinction, real or imaginary. He is invariably styled "The All-Highest" (Der Allerhöchste) in the newspapers, which sounds parlously like an infringement of divine privilege. His actions and movements are described, plurally as regards himself, in infinite false concords and outrages upon grammar, as for instance, "His Majesty, our All-Highest King and Lord, *have* deigned to nominate," &c., &c.; or, "His Majesty *are* returned to Berlin; All-Highest the same ones (Allerhöchstdieselben) rejoice *themselves* in possession of a blooming health." The *nuances* observed in addressing people of different ranks (in writing) are subtle, very subtle, and can only be mastered after a long residence in Germany, by a person of singularly observant habits and retentive memory.

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE IN BERLIN—EASTER AND CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS—SUMMER AMUSEMENTS—PRESS PHENOMENA—SLEDGING.

EASTER-TIDE is the great Protestant holiday-time—the annual period during which the "Reformed" populations of the Continent indulge in high jinks. All the saints' days and anniversary relaxations enjoyed by the inhabitants of Roman Catholic countries are sifted down, as it were, by Huguenot utilitarianism into one brief yearly space of holiday observance, lasting from Good Friday until the Wednesday after Easter Sunday, during which space the ordinary affairs and interests of human life suffer a species of mitigated annihilation that is fraught—to the upper classes of society, at least—with a considerable number of petty semi-comical ills and inconveniences. It is not easy to get your family dinner cooked at Eastertide in Protestant Germany; the most obedient of servants cast domestic discipline to the winds, and plunge into Paschal saturnalia. Nor is it much easier to get your dinner at a *gasthaus*, these establishments being thronged from morning till night with legions of unknown people, part—and a very important part—of whose annual programme for this festive season is to allay their hunger in public. No

newspapers are published from the Friday morning till the Saturday night, nor again from the Sunday morning till the Tuesday night—the second interval of extinguishment, as to the news of the world, lasting some sixty hours, during which, for all you can learn of current occurrences in the very town you live in, you might as well be in an open boat somewhere about the centre of the Pacific Ocean. Supposing this to be Easter Sunday, it may be that yesterday afternoon an earthquake destroyed London; in Berlin I cannot know of it until to-morrow evening at seven. This is, perhaps, not a very serious grievance, even to an Englishman who is congenitally afflicted by a burning and insatiable thirst for "latest intelligence." To a German it is none at all, for Germans *chez eux* do not care at all about news. What concerns the country the Government will look to; the rest, what does it matter to them? In truth, the interruption of one's news-purveyance is a trouble to be put up with easily; not so the suspension of their functions, however, by other persons, upon whom what ecclesiastics are apt to call "the old Adam" is pretty much dependent for keeping his microcosm in good working order. A man can maintain life, on a pinch, without telegrams; but nature abhors the void that is caused by a prolonged non-presence of butcher's meat and vegetables. Berlin tradesmen will not "stand and deliver" during the jocund Easter-time; you must lay in stores as though it were for a siege, and hold out gallantly, hopeless of succour from without, for the best part of the week. It is during Easter that one comes to understand the unfeigned benignity of sausage as a

national institution. Sausage helps the lamed household over many a culinary stile, and savourily bridges the dismal and uncertain interval between one hot meal and another. Sausage will keep, mostly; one may have quite a stock of the article on hand, and suffer no prejudice. Few Englishmen realise to themselves how many highly respectable—ay, high-well-born Prussian families—live chiefly on sausage from Green Thursday to St. Celestin's Day. I have called upon Excellencies at Eastertide—a "calling" season in North Germany—and, being unwarily shown into the dining-room by a domestic unaccustomed to do the honours of the front door, have come upon my exalted acquaintances eating sausage and bread *sur le pouce*, so to speak, without even the whited sepulchre of a tablecloth to give an air of regular dinner to the frugal meal imposed upon them by the annual holiday.

By two o'clock P.M. on Easter morning everybody has given everybody else an egg, and devoured a gruesome comestible yclept "Osternpfannekuchen," which looks like a fragment of tertiary formation, and is about as digestible. But in North Germany they do not confine their Easter celebrations to the bestowing of eggs and consumption of cakes in the guise of old red sandstone. No; they go higher up in the scale of creation than that. They give one another all manner of little animals—in chocolate. Why a hare should be deemed a gift peculiarly appropriate to Eastertide I have vainly endeavoured to discover; but so it is—that is, in Berlin. A hare, solid if small, and made of sweetstuff—hollow, if large, of papier-mâché frame, and copiously provided

with intestinal sugarplums—is the correct quadruped to offer, at the Paschal season, to any one upon whom you may be desirous to confer a handsome modicum of prospective good fortune. It is "lucky" to receive such a hare, which carries with it no painful March allusions, as in England; he who is popular, or blessed with many friends, finds his home-preserves liberally stocked with *lepores* on Easter Sunday morning. At the root of this droll custom doubtless lies some mystical Old-German, Wendish, or haply Scandinavian rite, long since forgotten of the vulgar. In Southern Italy the hare is by no means looked upon as a luck-bringer. I have known educated people in the Papal States to turn back and forego a projected excursion because a hare crossed their path. "Autres pays, autres mœurs." As I am writing there faces me a merry brown hare—to eat which were death—carrying upon his back a bucket full of silver pills, intended, I presume, to assuage the anguish of him who should be rash enough to swallow their bearer. The possession of this unwholesome animal, I am assured, will secure me a good time for at least the coming twelvemonth. So mote it be! Lambs and mice are also regarded favourably as family and friendly Easter offerings; but they have no pretensions to compete with hares as infeoffed of luck-bestowing properties. The dealers in bonbons and other Paschal paraphernalia exercise considerable ingenuity in meeting the overwhelming demand for eggs and hares that accrues during Passion Week; they even go so far as to blend the two objects in request, thereby producing phenomena the aspect of which might cause the earnest naturalist's hair to stand erect like

quills upon the fretful porcupine. I have seen with my own eyes hybrid monsters, half hare and half egg, which leave the spectator in horrible uncertainty as to whether the hare is laying the egg, or the egg is hatching the hare. Surely this conversion of a familiar mammal into an oviparous monstrosity is an unprincipled truckling to Easter requirements.

If there be one day of the year upon which, more particularly than upon any other, it beseems a foreigner residing in the Fatherland to attempt a description of German Christmas and the manner in which it is kept, that day, assuredly, is Boxing Day; for "Boxing" may be held to be the familiar, idiomatical English rendering of "Bescheerung," and Bescheerung is the very life and soul, inward spirit, and outward manifestation of a German Christmas. Not on Boxing Day, however, but on Christmas Eve, is everybody in Germany "boxed" by some one else. Servants by their masters, clerks by their employers, officials by the State, actors by lessees —any and every person who has, during the year, done something for you, or who, not having done anything for you, is moved by the spirit to assert that he or she would have done something for you had an opportunity for so doing presented itself; the servants of your friends, the resplendent *Suisses* that embellish official portals; Herr Schnitt, who cuts your hair (and is tipped after every operation); Rudolph, your Leibkellner, or "body waiter," who has already received hundreds of Trinkgelder from you in the course of the year—all these worthy souls expect to be "boxed" by you at this season, and, as a rule, get what they expect. This

custom, which is, after all, a kindly one, and promotes, on the whole (there are exceptions, though!) good feeling between man and man, weighs somewhat heavily upon the heads of large families, causing them to regard the advent of Christmas with sentiments the reverse of hilarious. A friend of mine in Berlin, who has quite a hatful of children, twenty servants, and fifteen dependents of a higher social order, such as librarian, secretary, governesses, masters, *intendants*, &c., does not get off in the matter of "Bescheerung" under an annual sum that few State *employés* in Prussia earn in a whole year *pour tout potage*. A queer offshoot of the "boxing" custom, as practised in Northern Germany, is the giving to one's servants of bread, in loaves, and of packets tied up with riband, of "Pfefferkuchen," a sort of pale and mawkish gingerbread, the very aspect of which makes a cultivated pylorus quake and convulsively contract itself. German domestics are, indeed, very keen upon this appalling comestible, and deeply resent the omission of its bestowal. It is dimly connected, in their minds, with luck to come, and must be given, not bought with one's own money, to impart the good fortune that is supposed to be mixed up somehow with its clammy, stick-jawy, and supremely indigestible substance. By reason of its association with luck—a popular opinion which I believe to have been promulgated by the medical faculty—the baneful Pfefferkuchen has an enormous sale in Prussia. To obtain an exact appreciation of it, in all its pernicious varieties and deadly glory, one should visit the open-air market in the "Schlossfreiheit," a temporary settlement of huts

divided off into blocks and penetrated by petroleum-lighted alleys that are thronged by Berliners of all classes, on "boxing" thoughts intent, from morning till night. In this and other *al fresco* markets of this city may be obtained, by careful observation, an understanding of Pfefferkuchen in all its branches. There is the military Pfefferkuchen, almost as large as life, and nearly as stiff a morsel to tackle as its human prototype—grenadier or fusilier. I can conceive this hero to be capable of fatal exploits. Stern is his bearing, menacing his attitude. There is the sentimental Pfefferkuchen—a heart, or more than one in extreme cases, inlaid with calcareous sugar-plums and a highly-coloured picture of lovers—a sort of dyspepsia-dealing Valentine. There is the Pfefferkuchen prosaic—a thick, long, brilliantly-varnished, heavy slab for purely domestic purposes, which might appropriately be labelled "The Family Doctor's Faithful Friend." There is the Pfefferkuchen playful, portraying Herr Kladderadatsch, "Der Deutsche Michel," or some other humorous folks-type. There is the legendary or supernatural Pfefferkuchen, enabling its purchaser to substantially consume Knecht Ruprecht, Santa Claus, Number Nip, and the Enemy of Mankind, whom he had hitherto only devoured in a literary sense. These are some of Pfefferkuchen's more conspicuous varieties; to recount them all were sheer mid-winter madness. *Non Dî, non homines!* But the custom of giving Pfefferkuchen, of one sort or another, has taken firm root in the Brandenburg Marches. It is odd, but true, that friends who really esteem you and wish you well will present you, at Christmastide, with a slab or

two of this pseudo-gingerbread, the comfortable disposal of which would perplex a hearty elephant. One can fancy an ostrich, after having "put away" a six-pound Pfefferkuchen, wildly imploring its keeper next morning for a box of Cockle's Pills and a pint of Pyretic Saline. And yet a good friend of mine, of whose sincere regard I am assured, bestowed upon me one Christmas Eve such a slab as that which is above referred to under the heading "The Pfefferkuchen prosaic." Let us hope that this gift was merely a matter of seasonable "form." I gave it away in charity, upon the principle laid down by that *lumen ecclesiæ* the Dean of St. Patrick's—*i.e.* "Whatever is totally unfit for human consumption, let it be given to the poor!" Christmastide is the proper time of year to make your fellow-creatures happy if you can, and, in the case of Pfefferkuchen, it is unquestionably more blessed to give than to receive.

For young Germany Christmas Eve is *the* night of the three hundred and sixty-five; the great anniversary, pleasantly surrounded by a diaphanous cloud of semi-mysterious, semi-humorous attributes; the one link remaining to connect the material and immaterial worlds; the rallying-ground of all those creations of fancy that, somehow or other, have power in a land of contradictions to shed a golden glamour over the sternest materialism—to poetise knitting, as it were, and etherealise *Butterbrod.* On that night the children reign really in Germany, though virtually they are the obedient and even timorous subjects of various supernatural influences, the traditional incorporations of which are as real to them as Punch and Father Christmas are to the English child.

And yet I don't know; perhaps the juvenile Fatherlanders have allowed that traitor loon Scepticism to insinuate himself into the stronghold of their unsophisticate Christmas faith of late years, for certain familiar figures-in-chief of German child-lore are less numerously represented nowadays than of yore in the market-place settlements that spring up, mushroom-like, every December *à l'intention* of the Berlinese rising generation; in particular, Knecht Ruprecht, although one of the quaintest and most sympathetic—from the grown-up point of view—of all the fantastic figures that tenant a German child's imagination, and furnish him with plentiful dream-matter at this season. On Christmas Eve, at twelve o'clock, things being as they should be in the child-realm, a loud and imperious knocking should be heard at the door of the room in which the family—save one of its male members, and where can he be, I should like to know ?—is assembled; whereat the hearts of those youngsters who are conscious of school-shortcomings and domestic delicts sink appreciably within their bosoms, the while their livers are turned to water. But the very extra good children feel a joyful leaping-up of the spirits, just chastened with that involuntary thrill which is suggested by the knowledge of an approaching contemplation of something decidedly outside the natural laws of every-day life. *Omne ignotum pro terribili.* An impavid elder of the household opens the door. In stumps a bowed, bearded, sturdy being, dressed in a sort of rough grey cassock and falling pointed cap, with a huge sack carried over his left shoulder, and a long birch-rod tucked under his right arm. A heavy chain

is loosely knotted round his waist, and clanks in a rather appalling manner as he advances towards the Familienkreis. With sharp, searching glances he takes stock of the *personnel* of the household, devoting an especially terrifying attention to those amongst the youngsters whose petty delinquencies suddenly appear to them to have acquired a heinousness for which no repentance can atone. "What is your name?" (*Wie heisst Du?*) Knecht Ruprecht (for it is he!) suddenly thunders out to one of these self-accusers. Truly, that is an evil moment! But Knecht Ruprecht is not to be trifled with; so a squeaking voice makes an effort to gasp out a name, or the family diminutive thereof—and the interrogatory continues. He soon knows all about that youngster's behaviour, and gets at the root of affairs; evasions make him very angry, so that his rough grey beard quite bristles up with indignation, and only the entire truth will satisfy his seasonable curiosity. Knecht Ruprecht is not so hard upon the children, though, when their confessions are made, as might have been anticipated from the severity of his tone and the implacability of his bearing. In the very worst cases, perhaps, he administers a couple of taps, *pro formâ*, with the rod; but mostly he develops a highly opportune forgivingness, and even displays a propensity to refer, in a promising sort of way, to the huge sack he carries on his shoulder. At last, he gives one surpassing rattle to his chain, and, holding his hearers with his glittering eye, exclaims, "See, young ones: outside stands the Christ-child, under the window. That dear child, loving and humble, waits to hear my report about you; he

wishes to make you all happy, even those who are not so good as the others; for he loves you all. But you must not see him. I am going to the window to make my report. You must all shut your eyes fast, upon honour (*auf Ehre*), although the lights will be out; and keep your eyes shut till you hear me say, 'Das Christkind ist weg,' then open them as wide as you can." Out go the lights, and the children (that is, the real good children, you know) shut their eyes fast. Perhaps the one or two older, sceptical little duffers, peep a little, more's the pity; but they do not see any the more for that. Presently—it seems an awfully long time to the loyal children, who would not wag an eyelid for the world—the *Losung* is heard, and at the same moment a flash and a glitter pervade the darkness, for the door and the eyes open simultaneously, and what is this pyramid of light rolling into the room; Knecht Ruprecht has altogether vanished; the Christkind has been seen by no one, not even for a second; but here is the concrete, the dazzling, the many-hued, richly-laden, glorious result of their combined *Vorspiel* or Prologos; it is the Christbaum, the fruitfullest of trees, that is wheeled in on the round table that generally stands near the great china stove in the corner, and whose ordinary prosaic function is to carry Mütterchen's knitting-basket and Väterchen's tobacco-jar. Long live Knecht Ruprecht, *der treue Diener seines Herrn*, as his homely old predicate signifies him to be. This household visitation of his lends a pretty and thoughtful grace to the *Bescheerung*, or begifting of the children, which is as settled an institution in Germany as, say, compulsory military service. No

Hausvater so poor, no Hausfrau so thrifty or careworn, as to omit the *Bescheerung* of the little ones, be it but with a twopenny tree, illuminated with pfennig tapers and bearing groschen fruit. And for those children who have no parents—haply, no homes—public benevolence provides a *Bescheerung*. Let us be joyful for that same!

Knecht Ruprecht is by no means the only typical embodiment of a generous idea that haunts the large hours of Christmas Eve, and the very small ones of Christmas morning. Who, I would ask, is this venerable and ruddy ecclesiastic (of the Descalzados order) with a fleecy beard and an umber eye beaming with liberality? He hath no sack; but the ample folds of his monkish frock are susceptible of containing many fine things passionately longed for by childish hearts. For a holy man he hath odd tastes and somewhat eccentric habits; as, for instance, that of coming down chimneys to pay visits, and of hiding away the most valuable objects in old shoes. This is St. Nicholas, if you please, who stows away articles of price in stockings, when those stockings are duly hung up in prominent places. That preternaturally shining chimney-sweep, who is by the way a seasonable benefactor too, must be a connection of the kindly saint—perhaps a very distant one; else why should St. Nicholas have taken to coming down chimneys, and the chimney-sweep be so fond of making presents on this particular anniversary? Depend upon it, they are "sib," as the Scotch have it. Of another dreadful personage, who crops up very much indeed hereabouts on Christmas Eve, the less we say the better. Perhaps those horns and that swishing tail fur-

nish a wholesome warning contrast to the utter benevolence of Saint Nicholas and Santa Claus, and hint, to the chimney-sweeper's advantage, that more than mere blackness is required to typify the d . . . . ! Let us not inquire too closely into this matter. But who is this, faintly ringing a phantom bell in the passage, and tapping with soft fingers (how unlike Knecht Ruprecht's hammering!) at the door? The Sandman is come; so good night all, and a Merry Christmas!

At no time of the year is the curious contrast between the positivism and romanticism of German character so conspicuously manifest as at Christmastide. Scarcely any other European of the present day is so radically rationalistic as the average Teuton. The practical turn of his intellect and the methodical materialism cultivated in him by his educational training, incline him to the consideration of all religions claiming a Divine origin as more or less ingenious and meritorious systems of ethics, humanly invented, and therefore legitimate subjects for human analysis and criticism. The purely religious significance of the Nativity anniversary is forlorn of attraction to the German intellect. Its chief charm lies in its miraculousness, which, however, must be believed in to be appreciated; and in faith, save in things demonstrable, the modern German is necessarily deficient, his reasoning faculties having been persistently developed, from his early boyhood, at the expense and to the repression of his sentimental instincts. But the "Sage," or legend of Christmas Day, appeals irresistibly to his imagination, and its infant hero, the Christkind, enjoys a larger share of his sympathies

than Santa Claus, Knecht Ruprecht, the Hampelmann, or any other of the supernatural types, half fairy, half magician, whose traditional connection with Christmas-tide he tolerantly, and even cheerfully, recognises. These latter creatures of fancy and folk-lore provoke no protest from the cultured German, be he ever so sceptical or incredulous with respect to the immortality of the soul or a future state of punishment and reward; for, as they make no pretence to be the outcome of revelation, his toleration of their seasonable influences involves no breach of intellectual consistency on his part. Were they in any way incident to a story which accident had developed into a dogma, their popularity in the Fatherland would not have endured till now. It has, however, survived the cold condemnation of pure materialism, because of their entire freedom from creed associations. Even Santa Claus—more correctly, Saint Nicholas—is a person of no essential importance in the Christian mythology. One may be a good Catholic, Greek Orthodoxian, Lutheran, Calvinist, or Dissenter, without giving a thought to this holy personage, save at Christmas time, when he serves as a plausible pretext for timely present-giving to little children. He was not an apostle; as a martyr he achieved no particular distinction; indeed, doubts have been cast upon the historical evidences of his very existence. Such being his ecclesiastical status, he is by no means objectionable to the German mind, which, if it classifies him at all, ranks him in the same category with Rumpelstiltkin, Rübezahl, and the Piper of Hamelin. How he originally came to be associated with long stockings and small shoes, in which recep-

tacles he is supposed to deposit his Christmas benefactions, or why he has been especially selected from amongst the innumerable saints in the Roman calendar to reward infantile virtue at this particular season of the year by secret and nocturnal methods, involving the simultaneous descent of millions of chimneys on his part, are enigmas the solution of which I must leave to the learned in German Christmas-lore. Such, no matter why or wherefore, are the functions with which he is credited by juvenile Germany, at least up to a time of life at which many pleasant and harmless illusions are dispelled by the most utilitarian and prosaic of modern educational systems. No figure is more familiar to tiny Hans and Lottchen than that of the munificent Santa Claus—an elderly monk of ruddy complexion, with very round black eyes, inquisitive rather than forbidding; a profuse lamb's-wool beard, with eyebrows to match; brown robes and cowl, sandal-shoon, and a knotted cord for a girdle. In this presentment he is purchasable for sums ranging between fourpence and ten shillings, according to size, and elaboration of costume detail. Not infrequently the good saint's body is hollow, separable into two sections, and susceptible of utilisation as a hiding-place for sugar-plums. His capacity in this respect being notorious in juvenile circles, his entrance into a German household is generally signalised by his prompt subjection to irreverent and barbarous outrage. The investigating instinct of infancy suggests that he should be torn asunder without an instant's delay, in order "to see what is inside him." The annals of Bulgarian atrocity may be searched in vain for a more truculent

deed than the rending in twain of St. Nicholas by one fell wrench. It is a consolation, however, to reflect that, so soon as he has undergone disembowelment, his seemingly mortal wounds can be healed with a single turn of the wrist, and that he suffers a hundred martyrdoms, if need be, at the suggestion of childish caprice without a visible shudder.

As for Knecht Ruprecht and the Hampelmann, they are altogether imaginary beings, forlorn of any claim to even so slight and loose a connection with the ecclesiastical history or the Church Calendar as that popularly allotted to Santa Claus. Knecht Ruprecht is the offspring of a simple popular superstition—a humble and homely impersonation of Divine omniscience and perfect justice. As his predicate denotes, he is supposed to be the lowly servant of the Christkind, by Him deputed to watch the actions and diagnose the impulses of children throughout the year. On Christmas Eve, during the dusky hour that precedes the discovery of the blazing, gift-laden Tree to the topmost branch of which a waxen image of the Christkind itself is suspended, Knecht Ruprecht, as already stated, makes his annual visit to the youngsters committed to his surveillance. He is very old, but lusty and vigorous; his beard is long and grey, his bright, restless eyes overshadowed by huge bushy eyebrows, his cheeks and brow deeply wrinkled, his expression severe, his voice harsh, his utterance abrupt and brief. He is clad in a flowing russet-coloured robe, with a hood of the same hue, and carries a rugged staff, with which he announces his approach by tapping thrice on the door or window of the room in which the children are assembled,

apprehensively awaiting his advent, their consciences all awake to countless petty derelictions of the past twelvemonth. On his back, swung over his left shoulder, he bears a large sack, containing rewards for good little boys and girls, but also a formidable rod for the fustigation of infant malefactors. As soon as the three taps have sounded on the casement-pane a dreadful silence reigns throughout the room (dimly lighted by a single slender waxen taper) for some thirty seconds; at the expiration of which interval, fraught with harrowing retrospect to the guilty and tremulous expectation to the virtuous, the door flies open with a crash, as though smitten by a fierce gust of wind, and Knecht Ruprecht appears on its threshold. He casts a searching glance around him. The children cower under his eye and huddle together. That is, indeed, a thrilling moment! Then he steps solemnly forward, and makes his award to each in succession, succinctly rehearsing the deserts, evil and good, of his youthful charges, whose amazement at the accuracy of his information almost deprives them of breath wherewith to answer the short, sharp questions with which he intersperses his too pointed remarks. What impresses them deeply is the intimacy with their private lives implied by the circumstance that he invariably addresses them by the diminutive or pet names to which they are accustomed to answer in their family circle. How shall Friedrich or Elizabeth keep up even the timidest scepticism with respect to the supernatural powers of a mysterious stranger who calls them over the coals for filched preserves or lessons unsaid by the familiar appellations of Fritzchen or Lieschen? Oddly

enough, the presence of Knecht Ruprecht in the room selected for his reception is always coincident with the absence therefrom of some stalwart male member of the household—some Onkel Karl or Schwager Wilhelm, whom urgent private business calls away a few minutes before the fearsome Knecht's visit becomes due. Did it occur to the perplexed little ones, upon so thrilling an occasion, to put this and that together, they might find it not so very difficult to account for Ruprecht's extraordinary familiarity with their personal characteristics and transactions. But happily for them, children under seven—and for such as these does the Christkind's rugged deputy make apparition in thousands of German dwellings on the Weihnachts-abend—are still delightfully innocent of the inductive process of reasoning, even in a land of early intellectual culture. Long may they remain so. Upon the tender foundation of their sweet credulity stands, as yet firmly, the whole edifice of Knecht Ruprecht's significance and authority.

Of the Hampelmann it may be said with truth, that he is at once an uncertain and an unsteady character. He may be a stately knight, or a dashing hussar, or a highly coloured imp, with features all out of drawing and unnaturally subordinate to a predominant expression —haply, a hideous scowl or a ludicrous grin. But he must oscillate, because of the wire to which his nether part is riveted, and to which he owes the chronic restlessness that is his leading speciality. A Hampelmann who should not incessantly waggle would be a standing reproach to his order. Only when temporarily invalided through rough usage at juvenile hands is anything like

stability excusable in this queer Christmas creature. Of the Hampelmann's story I know absolutely nothing; nor have I been able to ascertain, by searching inquiry, how he contrived to attain his present position as a member of the extra-natural company indispensably accessorial to German Christmas celebrations. That position, however, is unquestionable. But for the intrinsic shakiness of its occupant, I should also define it as firm.

A distinguished "super." in the company above alluded to is an eminent namesake of St. Nicholas, whom I wish to mention with all the respect due to his exalted rank and extensive mundane influence, but whose intimate association at Christmastide with the celestial almoner and provost, Claus and Ruprecht, and even with the harmless though unstable Hampelmann, does strike an admirer of the "eternal unities" as somewhat anachronistic. I refer to the Author of All Evil, whose dread effigy stands cheek by jowl with that of his saintly synonym upon the toyshop shelf or counter, and, I am bound to say, is no whit less in demand amongst the youthful celebrants of Christmas rites than the image of their midnight benefactors. This apparent anomaly may perhaps be explained by the circumstance that the Foul Fiend's body is also liable, under judicious treatment, to a solution of continuity resulting in the discovery of bonbons. If I may say so without irreverence, there is a certain family likeness between Holy Nick and Old Nick. Their features are not strikingly dissimilar, differing rather in the colour of their accessories than in shape, outline, or expression. It is conceivable that an

artist in Christmas figures, by dexterous manipulation of their respective costumes and hirsute honours, might convert the most benevolent-looking St. Nicholas that ever glided down a nursery chimney into a Beelzebub of surpassingly malignant aspect, and *vice versâ*. The same materials are employed to impart superhuman amiability to the countenance of the saint and demoniacal ferocity to that of the devil; only, whereas the former's face is "made up" with white lamb's wool and pink paint, his Satanic Majesty's lineaments are rendered terrible by a bold treatment in black wool and dark red pigments, picked out with burnt umber. He is also, on the whole, a thought shinier than Santa Claus, and conveys the impression of being used to a tropical climate, whilst St. Nicholas is as obviously indigenous to northern soil as our own Father Christmas himself. By the way, the last-named eidolon is exclusively English-bred, and has not, as yet, migrated to any Continental realms. There is no such person as "Vater Weihnacht" in Germany, "Père Noël" is unknown to Frenchmen, and Italian imaginativeness has not yet grasped the notion of a "Padre Natale." To England alone, amongst Christian countries, belongs that grand virile impersonation of the Wintry Genius, patron of good cheer, whose attributes are charity, loving-kindness, sociability, and mirthfulness.

Two striking specialities of Christmastide in Germany are the amazing demand for fir-saplings throughout the Fatherland, and the no less extraordinary trade in cheap toys, edibles, and articles of apparel carried on in the open-air markets. Over two millions of Christmas-trees

are annually required in Prussia for home consumption, besides the vast numbers exported to foreign parts. Northern Germany chiefly derives its supply of Weihnachtsbäume from the Harz and Silesia. Trees of from twelve to fifteen feet in height are no uncommon sight in the lofty saloons of wealthy Germans; and the "building of the Christmas tree," as the decoration of that evergreen is technically described in the Fatherland, frequently furnishes the elder members of a numerous family with occupation for the better part of a week before the Vigil of the Nativity. The Emperor's tree touches the ceiling of the Blue Drawing Room, an apartment of noble proportions, and bears fruit of many thousand pounds' value; for no member of his huge household, from the Lord High Chamberlain to the humblest "helper" in the royal stables, is unforgotten by the august "builders of the tree." It is no exaggeration to say that the tree, its preparation, its rites, and the gifts suspended from its branches or tastefully arranged around its stem on fair white damask cloths, constitute the German Christmas. The pleasures of the table are altogether subordinate to the delights of the tree; indeed, the Germans, though mighty eaters, do not make a practice of celebrating Christmas by extra-copious feasting, nor do they associate any especial dish with this particular anniversary, as Englishmen do. But they bestow infinite forethought and pains upon utilising the tree as a vehicle for the conveyance of things beautiful and useful to those they hold dear, as well as to their dependents and servants. Heads of households make it their business, long before the Christmas season sets in, to

discover the exact wishes and wants of every person whom they consider entitled to participate in their "Weihnachts-Bescheerung;" and much subtle diplomacy is displayed in the conduct of such inquiries, the dual object being kept steadily in view of conferring the maximum of gratification upon the donee, and yet ensuring that the pleasure imparted shall also be a surprise. The secret aspirations of children and domestics are wormed out of them by judicious leading questions, at moments when nothing is farther from their thoughts than the providential tree, which, however, in due time, yields fulfilment to their fondest desires. Towards the end of October, as the morning-marketings are waxing chilly, Gretchen the cook, in some household conference with her mistress, has haply let fall a few words of casual lamentation anent the slenderness of her savings, which preclude her from purchasing a thick shawl or wadded bodice to keep out the cold during the approaching winter. Two months later, admitted to the precincts wherein the illuminated tree is set up, what is her astonishment and joy to find, on a table covered with "Bescheerungs-Gegenstände," a large white parcel, neatly tied up with pink or blue ribbon and bearing her name in characters "large, bold, and handsome," the contents of which prove to be the very garment she has hitherto longed for in vain. Hard by, Gustav lights upon the object of his hopes, a miniature Guard-Cuirassier's equipment, and perfect bliss awaits Aennchen in the shape of a ventriloquial doll with practicable eyelids and a magnificent trousseau. It is needless to say that these children have triumphantly passed through the ordeal of

Knecht Ruprecht's moral revision. Hence are they begifted with purely pleasure-giving objects. Had they incurred the Knecht's displeasure, their presents would have been useful, instead of recreative or decorative. It is but a mitigated rapture that is derived from the acquisition of new velvet knickerbockers or furred boots. What children, and eke grown-up people, chiefly delight in is the superfluous, not the necessary. In accurately apportioning reward to different degrees of merit, the German Christmas-tree is at once a promoter of wholesome ambition and a denouncer of neglected opportunities. It impersonates distributive justice, and German children unconsciously pluck many an intelligible moral lesson from its boughs.

The Christmas markets are held in the principal squares and plätze, or open spaces, of all German towns. Their average duration is three weeks (from the 15th December to Twelfth Day), but in some cities they are tolerated by the municipal authorities throughout the whole of the Christmas month. In Berlin, the greatest of these *al-fresco* fairs is established on the vast Schlossplatz, under the very windows of the State apartments. A small town of wooden huts, pierced by five or six main thoroughfares and dozens of narrow alleys, rises as though by magic from the surface of that stony wilderness, between sunset and sunrise of the 14th, unless that date should happen to fall on a Sunday, in which case the building operations are postponed for four-and-twenty hours. On the succeeding evening the market, brilliantly lighted up by petroleum lamps, is opened, many august personages honouring it with a brief visit;

and from that moment to midday of Christmas Eve—that is to say, between eight in the morning and ten P.M.—it is incessantly thronged by all classes of the Berlin community. The Weihnachts-Märkte are glutted with astonishing bargains. In the matter of penny toys they defy European competition. Gingerbread is one of their staples. The German variety of this comestible, to which I have already referred, rejoices in the name of Pfefferkuchen (Anglicè, pepper-cake), and is a trifle less heavy than lead. It is also "hot i' the mouth," and extraordinarily filling at the price. A penn'orth is a full dose for a robust adult, and more dyspepsia can be got out of that modicum than a similar quantity of any other known edible will yield. It is the correct thing to present your friends with highly ornate blocks of this maleficent compound, which they are supposed to devour in your honour. If they entertain a particularly warm regard for you, they, too, will send you handsome slabs of decorative pepper-cake—so that, should you happen to be a social favourite, you may count upon receiving a hundredweight or two of a substance that, considered as a token of amity, is just the sort of food upon which Alexander Borgia, had he been acquainted with its virtues, would have entertained his wealthy relatives after having persuaded them to make their testamentary dispositions in his favour. In compliance with time-honoured custom, affianced German youths forward kilogrammes of Pfefferkuchen to the objects of their affections on Christmas Eve, it being well understood by both parties to this transaction that the gift is purely complimentary, involving no alimentary

obligations whatsoever. I have never been able to discover what becomes of all the Pfefferkuchen that is purchased during the Christmas week, and bandied about, so to speak, from house to house, after the thrifty and practical German manner. A passes on his superfluous Pfefferkuchen to B, B to C, and so on all through the alphabet. But what does Z. do with *his* deadly accumulations? It may be that the final function of Pfefferkuchen is an agricultural one. I can conceive its utilisation as top-dressing on very poor land, requiring a vehement chemical stimulus to promote fertility. Thus, possibly, what is death to the man may be life to the early spring cabbage. It is customary in Berlin to mould —or, should I say to cast?—effigies of the Emperor, the Crown Prince, and Bismarck in Pfefferkuchen, the features, uniform buttons, and war decorations being done in coloured sugar-plums, by which method of artistic treatment some truly remarkable effects are achieved. The contemplation of the venerable William's counterfeit presentment executed in this dire material can scarcely fail to suggest the reflection, a long way "after" Hamlet, that "Imperial Cæsar, turned to pepper-cake, may fatten fields and drive the potato-beetle away!"

The visible contrast between winter and summer is much more strongly marked in North Germany than it is in England; and I can quite easily imagine that two persons equally sane, observant, and conscientious, might respectively, with the utmost truthfulness, describe that district of the Mark Brandenburg which includes the royal residences of Berlin, Potsdam, and Charlottenburg as a terrestrial hell or as an earthly paradise—one

having visited it during the colder, the other during the warmer months. In truth, its aspect from November to April is desolate and ghastly in the extreme. The excessive severity of the cold annihilates all verdure, and leaves not a symptom of life on the face of Mother Earth; the woods are stricken grey and stark, as though they had suffered petrifaction; the ground is as adamant to the foot; the waters cease to flow; a death-ban seems to have been pronounced against the lower organisations, as though Nature had made up her mind to suspend her reproductive energies for a while in the hard-fisted old Marquisate. In England, growing things that are green may be seen *sub Jove frigido* in the toughest of winter-tides—even in London, whose parks show a dulled but unmistakable emerald tint, be the mercury ever so eagerly bent upon getting out of the thermometer through the bottom of the ball. Not so in the marrow-province of Prussia, where winter smites the land with a spell that plunges it into a cold and death-like trance. Walking along the streets of Berlin while the ante-Lent season is at its gayest, you are sure to come across, in every "Querstrasse"—however fashionable or the reverse—what appears to be a lifeless wooden stump, probably obstructing the footway, and looking as forlorn as an old ship's hulk wallowing in the mud of a river at low water. In one of those new *quartiers* where the best society of the German capital is huddled together in flats, and hard by a church which is so ludicrously ugly that you cannot be as angry with it as you assuredly would be were it only half as hideous as it is, there is a street through which royalty itself frequently

passes — the Empress is a regular patroness of the church—and which is the outlet of a whole fashionable parish to the Thiergarten. One of these huge morsels of what is in winter apparently dead wood—although in summer a splendid tree—has been left standing exactly in the middle of the street in question, where the latter merges into the Beast Garden; so that anybody not intimately acquainted with the place, driving into or out of this street on a dark night, runs the risk of smashing his horses, his carriage, and himself against about the very last thing one would expect to encounter in the centre of the roadway. To regulate your driving into the Matthaeikirchstrasse by the venerable axiom "*In medio tutissimus ibis*," would be to rush upon destruction —that way compound fracture lies!

Forgive the digression. You should see them in June—these rugged and weird-looking stumps, stuck about the side streets, and the market-places, and the courtyards of houses — where the laws of the land are broken with a regularity that does honour to the inhabitants' appreciation of the watchfulness and efficiency of the police force—and all sorts of odd corners and nooks, otherwise glory-holes of dirt and rubbish: you should see them during "the leafy month," clad in the most luxurious and brilliant green liveries! Just as gay and bright do the cities as well as the plains of the Mark look in June, as they appear desolate and grim in January. Trees dot the streets with delightful irregularity. Save in the Linden, the Bellevue, and one or two other set promenades, there has been no plan observed, no order followed, in the

planting of these hearty and hardy old Dryads. Sheer love of the green leaf and its rural associations has evidently prompted some house-owner here and there to insert a slip of some favourite tree amongst the kidney stones fronting his house, without notifying his intention to the authorities. The sapling once grown to a noticeable size, should the police object to its presence, he who planted it would fight for its existence if need be, or implore that it might be spared, with all the passion developed for "Picciola" in the breast of the prisoner whose adventures we have all read. As tenacious of his indefinite as of his codified rights, such a resolute Berliner would generally gain his point even from the police; "the tree was there, it was in front of his house, and nobody should deprive him of it, as it had grown, although he had nothing to do with putting it there;" so there is many a stout, honest tree flourishing exceedingly in what would otherwise be absolutely a stony wilderness, and the whole aspect of the town is thereby brightened up to an extraordinary extent, or to an extent that, at least, seems extraordinary to any foreigner walking through its streets in summer-time and recalling their appearance during the month of January. The Thiergarten and its environs undergo a still more astonishing transformation. The physiognomy of that huge wood about Christmas-tide is so appallingly lugubrious, that I can compare it to nothing but a Doré sketch in the illustrations to the "Wandering Jew" —the one, I think, that terminates the series. As an example of its effect upon the spirits, I may mention that one December I escorted an English lady, just

arrived in Berlin from London, on a drive through the chief *allées;* and that five minutes after she had entered its gloomy precincts she burst into tears, and utterly refused to be comforted. But in June the Thiergarten is one of the loveliest and most romantic resorts in Europe; and, were it not for the atrocity of the stenches with which it is infected, would be one of the most delightful. Its glades have not been rolled and gravelled into comfortable formality; it is yet more than half-wild, and altogether enchanting; and the villa-gardens that flank the forest's southern side are, many of them, masterpieces of horticultural art.

The Berlinese are unquestionably great at gardening, and have also a natural bias in favour of flowers. An American Minister observed to me one day, *àpropos* of the latter fact, that their inclination was doubtless the result of an instinct providentially bestowed upon them in view of the perils they run from mephitic exhalations, vegetable matter being an eager absorbent of such gases as are dangerous to human health. This may or may not be the case; but it is very certain that horticulture is at a premium in Berlin, and that flower-pots and window-gardens belong to the domestic institutions of the German capital. What the Berlinese have done to render theatre-going not only possible but agreeable during the burning summer months deserves honourable mention. Their minor houses, all situated in suburbs far distant from the fashionable centre of Berlin, are with scarcely any exceptions constructed in such a manner that their lobbies communicate directly by broad staircases with large and prettily laid out gardens, in

which fountains play, concerts are held before and after the dramatic performances, and correctly-attired waiters circulate amongst rustic tables with kaleidoscopic ices, beer—the cool, foaming, non-intoxicating !—with fruits, *butterbrödchen*, or frozen champagne and Strasburg pie, if your means permit you to indulge in those luxuries. Every door in the auditorium, so to speak, opens into the fresh air; the gas is kept at a minimum, save that supplying the footlights; and the performances are broken by at least three intervals of a quarter of an hour each, which you pass in a spacious pleasaunce, where you can smoke your cigarette or *entr'acte* without offending anybody's sensibilities, assuage your thirst, and take in a stock of coolness that will carry you on satisfactorily until the action of the piece is again interrupted. This is a truly sensible arrangement; for it consults the comfort of the public, and ensures an ample attendance at performances that, if these theatres were hermetically closed like the royal houses, would not draw a hundred people a night. The managers thus do a good business throughout the summer, and so do the restaurants attached to their establishments.

The practical Berlinese not only supplement their theatres with gardens, but all their other social institutions, except their churches—though, as these latter are sparsely frequented at any time of the year, and scarcely at all in summer, it is easy to account for the apparent shortcoming. No sooner has the warm weather shown a lively disposition to set in, than gardens spring up all over the town, frequently in places with which your mind, accustomed to consider them from a wintry point

of view, has never associated flowers or fountains, and experiences some difficulty in so doing. Say you turn into a familiar restaurant on the Russian Embassy side of the Linden, or in the Friedrichstrasse, or, in fact, anywhere about the Friedrichstadt. Where your hybernally educated eye is accustomed to look for a dismal flagged yard, pent in by high frowning walls, its only ornament perchance a ghastly pump, you perceive a sort of excerpt from fairyland, made up of bright glass, gay flowers, flashing, plashing, dazzling water, green shrubs, gas, and white tablecloths. The supper is no better than it was in winter-time—the waiters are not one whit more polite or obliging—but the place itself, like charity, covers a multitude of sins.

One Sunday evening, about a decade ago, during my residence in Berlin, as I was vainly endeavouring to get warm by a small sepulchral stove, and as vainly racking my brain to discover in what particular respect a Berlin Sunday has the advantage over a London one in the matters of gaiety and recreation, my servant brought in the evening paper, laying it down on a chair by my side with the air of a triumphant philanthropist—the sort of flourish that one would feel inclined to excuse in a Humane Societarian who had just saved a drowning man from the jaws of death. In so thorough-paced a Sabbatarian country as Prussia, it often struck me as a decided anomaly that the Sunday papers, which are few (though the desolation of the day would provoke even Germans, the most moderate newspaper readers of Western Europe, to purchase six times the number actually published), should be issued in the evening instead of the morning.

The freshness of the news they contain would not be lessened by twelve hours' earlier publication; for that matter, they might be published on the Friday instead of the Sunday evening, without being up to the English press mark of novelty, although by such an arrangement their *abonnés* would get the intelligence contained in their columns some forty-eight hours earlier than under the present system. But their printing work should at least be executed on the secular Saturday night, for the sake of consistency; whereas, as it is, compositors, pressmen, &c., are compelled to sacrifice their Sunday mornings to get the papers in question out by the evening.

That there is some excellent and convincing reason for this breach of a rule that puts Prussia and Great Britain upon a footing of equality, so far as Sunday dulness is concerned, I do not for a moment doubt. A long and intimate acquaintance with Northern Germany has convinced me that there is no eccentricity, inconvenience, or discomfort practised or suffered within these realms which cannot be proved by a Prussian of well-balanced national mind to be in reality the material application of principles that are founded on eternal laws of wisdom, justice, and fitness. It is this calm belief in their being always right that I admire so much in my many Prussian friends. They do not make a fuss about that fact, nor consider it worth their while to bellow their convictions into everybody's ears, like certain of their neighbours late and, I fear, still their enemies; but none the less do they entertain the profound and thorough conviction that they "know better" than other people, and that their institutions, social habits, and opinions are alone worthy of

being adopted by any reasonable human being. For those who differ from them they experience the sort of contemptuous pity that the captain of a first-class ironclad might be expected to feel for the tattooed and feathered "bosses" of a lot of South Sea Island canoes paddling round the walls of his floating fortress. We English used to be like this; but we have waxed somewhat diffident of late years, the evidence adduced by all sorts of *faits accomplis* having tended to shake our faith in that article of our—unwritten—national creed which taught our overwhelming superiority to the rest of the human race. The Germans have picked up the mantle of self-appreciation—shall I say self-conceit?—that fell from our shoulders, just as they began to feel themselves big enough to wear it; and although it is a cumbersome garment, unbecoming, and old-fashioned as Time himself, they never put it off for an instant. Everything that is —Prussian—is right; and, unless you seem to accept this dictum as a great Truth with a capital T, you may expect to be looked upon with small favour by the natives of Borussian soil. There are, however, certain things coming under the respective heads of "institutions, social habits, &c.," as above, which, to those whom Nature has inconsiderately cast in a non-Prussian mould, appear to be at odds with common sense and convenience. Mind, I only say appear, and appearances are deceitful: very likely the things in question are in every way desirable—too good, in fact, to be understanded of a foreign and therefore limited intellect.

For an example or two of what I mean, I will turn to the daily press of Berlin, and take up the typical Sun-

day evening paper, a cursory glance at which suggested the above remarks, whose bearing, to borrow the words of a certain immortal master-mariner, lies in the application thereof. The first astonishing feature of this Sunday paper is that it is intituled *Berlin Monday Paper*. The Prussians are mighty men; but they cannot annihilate time—at least I think not. Sunday will not become Monday, even if they declare it to be so. However, "What's in a name?" it may be said. If a man instruct the members of his household to the effect that, when he asks for his hymn-book they are to bring him a glass of sherry, and they obey his injunction, the words "hymn-book" in that particular family stand for "glass of sherry," and nobody is anything the worse. Society at large continues to interpret the words in the old black leather-bound sense. It is "thusly" with my Sunday paper's title. But looking down the third column of the front page I come upon two paragraphs, in immediate juxtaposition to one another, which contain statements relating to the day of the week that are somewhat difficult to reconcile with complete soundness of mind on the part of the sub-editor. Paragraph one—under the heading "Berlin"—states that "the Emperor will open the Landtag in the White Hall of the Royal Castle *to-morrow* (*Monday*), at one o'clock." Paragraph two, under the same heading, announces that "the Emperor, who has dined alone for several days, dined *yesterday* (*Sunday*) with the Crown Prince." Both these paragraphs appear on the same day, however, and are written by the same person, each being preceded by a star—for writers in the German press seldom sign their articles,

content to assert their individuality by a prefatory mark, generally chosen from the Zodiac or the Greek alphabet. But on what day could they have been written? What is that day of which the to-morrow is Monday and the yesterday Sunday? It must be an abstract day, a high-in-ether-oscillating and by-fleshy-conventional-rules-not-to-be-regulated day, of which mere commonplace Englishmen can form no definite conception. But the *Berliner Montag Zeitung* is only one among many in its encroachments upon ancient tradition and its removal of venerated landmarks. All the "dailies" of the capital, save two or three, are published to-night, so to speak, and dated to-morrow. Even the *Kreuz Zeitung*, that most loyal, respectable, and Conservative of papers (I omit the prefix "news," as being irrelevant to the description of a Prussian journal), comes out regularly under false colours so far as its date is concerned—to what end I am at a loss to understand. In a race with Edax Rerum, the best of us is sure to be beaten; antedate as you will, it is a good deal more than six to four on the old party with the hourglass.

But the oddest thing of all is that though the Berlin papers pretend to outstrip Time denominationally, they lag behind time—not to mention their English and American contemporaries—in every other respect. Take an instance: I used to receive in Berlin a copy of *The Daily Telegraph* thirty-six hours *after* its publication in London; at the same time was delivered to me a local paper twelve hours *before* its publication—that is, accepting its date as correct. Turning to the telegraphic columns of both journals, I found in each exactly the

same despatches—Agency despatches, of course—from Paris, Vienna, Rome, Constantinople, St. Petersburg, and so forth; with this difference, however, to the advantage of the English journal, that the latter daily received special messages from its foreign correspondents containing intelligence of interest, whilst the Berlin sheet was content to reprint those messages transmitted hither through the ordinary *postal* channel. I need perhaps scarcely say that you may look in vain through the columns of a Berlin "daily" for an original correspondence such as may be read in any leading English newspaper. The *Augsburger Allgemeine*, the *Kölnische*, and three or four of the principal Viennese journals, maintain a staff of "Ausländische Redakteuren:" but in the capital of German intelligence people do not care to be posted up *au jour le jour* in the affairs of foreign nations, so the newspaper proprietors very naturally limit their staff of correspondents—extra-Borussian—to a *personnel* of two, Herr von Paste and Professor Scissors. These gentlemen's communications are lacking in freshness and originality; but what does that matter, seeing that this public does not in the least want to know what Mr. So-and-So thinks about the course of events in London or Paris. All it requires is facts, recounted in the shortest and driest terms; nor is it over-curious even about those, supposing them to have their origin outside the frontier of the German Empire.

Let us now turn to the subject of local news, upon which one would think—considering the indifference of the Berlinese to foreign intelligence—the newspaper proprietors of the Residenz would concentrate all their force

and energy. There are two or three journals, or rather crepuscularians, published in Berlin, which profess to inform their readers accurately, from evening to evening —always under the next day's date—of all the arrivals from abroad and from the provinces in the several hotels of the capital. A whole page of one of these sheets—the *Fremdenblatt*—is covered nightly with the names, titles, and social positions of the persons whom business, pleasure, or accident have conducted to the Northern Athens; but the announcements in question are far from being served up hot and hot, as I cannot but think they should be, to attain the maximum of practical utility. One night, some years ago, I espied in the *Fremdenblatt's* list of arrivals the name of an old Austrian comrade whom I had not seen for an age. Next morning I hurried off to the Royal, hoping to catch him before breakfast and carry him off to Hiller's for a "Gabelfrühstück." In reply to my inquiry, the bland porter of that most exclusive hostelry—the Mivart's of Northern Germany—informed me that "it did him right suffering—the Herr Obrist was away-journeyed; he had only this time two days in the house stayed, and was already since before yesterday departed." So! The *Fremdenblatt*, therefore, had announced his arrival two days after he left the town, although he actually stopped forty-eight hours in the "Royal." There is a flaccidity about this "institution" that reminds one of French journalism—minus the incorrectness of the latter, of course, which is unrivalled all over the wide world.

Yet one more anomaly connected with the daily press of Berlin, and I have done. The price of any newspaper

whatever is threepence. The size of the said newspaper is about one-third or one-half of that of any London morning sheet. Each of its pages contains three short columns (one or two journals have four) of printed matter. Rarely do the telegrams occupy more than the half of one of these columns. The proportion of advertisements to what stands for news is as three to one in some papers—as six to one in others. Lately the leading organs all raised their advertisement rates, coolly informing the public that "they had had to choose between that measure and raising the price of their issue; and, all things considered, they preferred to adopt the former method of increasing their profits." Raise the price of their issue! Why I never took up a Berlin paper without wondering how, in a land of thrift, anybody could be found to pay threepence for it. Comparing it with any of its English contemporaries, one is at a loss to account for its ability to maintain the least spark of commercial vitality. If a ceremony of any importance takes place in any part of Great Britain, if a member of the House addresses his constituents in Glasgow, or Dublin, or any other provincial city however remote, the proceedings or the speeches, as the case may be, are telegraphed up to the London offices, and duly appear next morning as a matter of course. Well, the inauguration of the Schiller statue was a great national ceremonial, the dignity and moment of which were signalised by the presence of the Emperor, the Heir-Apparent to the German throne, and a host of august and distinguished personages. It took place at 10.30 A.M. on the 10th of November, and the first detailed notice of it

was published at 7 A.M. on the 12th of November in the *National Zeitung*. The toleration of such reporting delays astonishes one, especially in so eminently practical a people as the Prussians.

But, as I hinted above, there is a reason for everything that is done or left undone in North Germany; and, talking with a Prussian acquaintance one day upon the subject of local press shortcomings, I soon found that they were to be explained quite as logically as a good many other little difficulties that are apt to puzzle a foreigner until he has been carefully inoculated with Prussianism. Here is what my inoculator for the time being said, or nearly so. "We North Germans, you see, do not care much more for newspaper reading than we do for what you Englishmen call society. I am a Berliner, of many friends, and I know a dozen houses into which a newspaper never penetrates, while I do not know one at which I would venture to call of an evening, without being invited, and ask for a cup of tea. We consider newspaper-reading in a man a sign of poverty of intellect. In our leisure hours we like to talk, play cards, or go to the theatre; if we want to read, we read books from which we can learn something useful. What the better am I for knowing to-day, instead of to-morrow, next week, or never for that matter, that the Pope is thinking about leaving Rome, or that the Prince of Wales is ill of a fever? If my friends see me reading the papers at the club, four out of five will ask me why I am wasting my time over such rubbish. Our newspaper proprietors would be great fools to spend their money in special telegrams which would interest nobody, and long foreign

correspondence which nobody would read. They would not sell a dozen extra copies if they competed ever so successfully with your English journals. And so, not being great fools, but shrewd men of business, determined to get the largest possible rate of interest upon their capital, they supply their readers with just what their readers—who, be it remembered, are few in number—require, and nothing more. All we want to hear about is that which affects us Germans; let other people look to their own affairs, we shall attend to ours, never fear. For what Mr. Gladstone or M. de Giers may say or do, so long as they do not interfere with German interests, we simply do not care one rap."

As a matter of fact, the average Prussian is a far better educated man than the Englishman, and is taught a variety of acquirements, scientific and artistic, that are not even glanced at by the British system of imparting knowledge. He delights greatly in intellectual gymnastics, and finds refreshment after his bread-earning labours in accumulating information, tracing back events to causes, chopping logic, and especially in submitting every topic that comes under his ken to the process of analysis. It matters not upon what subject he may be called upon to exercise his intelligence—politics, woman, business, physiology, sentiment, cricket, history, or physics—he is sure to set about picking it to pieces, classifying the fragments into subdivisions, these latter into *nuances*, and so on, until there is nothing left to account for. All is fish that comes to his analytical net. He is full of "*cultur*," frequently erudite, always desirous to increase his stock of knowledge. On the other

hand, the smallest thing will amuse him. He is the most easily pleased fellow in the world. That intense, painful sensitiveness upon questions of art that prompts the Italian to venomous criticism or passionate protest is wanting in him. He is not scathingly satirical like a Frenchman, nor angularly cynical like an Englishman. Put him down behind a mug of beer in a garden, play to him Strauss and Offenbach, however badly; let off three squibs and a rocket within easy distance of his table, so that he may not be obliged to move in order to contemplate that modest pyrotechnical display; talk to him the feeblest of scandal, interspersed with the most pointless of anecdote, and he shall pass a perfectly happy, harmless, hilarious evening. His intellectual standard is really so high that he ought to be far above admiration of all pageants, pomps, and vanities whatever. Just show him a procession or a foreign monarch, a review or an illumination—not even a Neapolitan will go in with more gusto for any spectacle emblematic of power or commemorative of privilege and caste than will your cultivated, thoughtful, logical, objective German. Horse-racing is not altogether in his line; there is too much trouble about it, too many intervals, and too long, between event and event; nothing in it appeals to his special faculties of enjoyment. The odds are that an average Teuton will know more about its history, its purpose, the effect it has achieved in improving the breed of horses, its æsthetics and tendencies, than an average Englishman, although "the Turf" is a British creation; but he would rather discuss all these with you, giving and receiving data and deductions, over a series of "bocks," than he

would go to see his theories put in practice and his studies illustrated. As for betting, that is a science he has not touched—and long may his acquaintance with it be deferred! His speculations are of another order; he cannot make a book—to waste his money he is ashamed. In short, he is far too honest and right-minded to swindle his fellow-creatures, and too prudent to be taken in by them; so that the slaves of the Ring have given him up in despair, and, as far as racing is concerned, he is left in peace to enjoy the negative unemotional sort of pleasure to be derived from contemplating a number of horses, about which he knows nothing, scampering about a green field with parti-coloured men on their backs for the purpose of winning something that is scarcely worth the trouble. That is how the majority of Germans interpret racing; and, what is more, that is pretty nearly what racing is in Germany.

During each successive winter—generally during the Christmas week or early in January—a fictitious liveliness that melts away under the breath of the first southerly wind is imparted to the most melancholy of cities by "the tintinnabulation of the bells, bells, bells," which incessantly ring, day and night, in every quarter of the German capital. An eruption of bells breaks out all over harness of every description; the droshky horses, attached to clumsy sledges very much resembling old-fashioned country pond-punts, are attended, as they hobble along, by joyful sounds that seem to mock the utter dolefulness of their aspect and gait. An adjutant's horse is a low-spirited beast, as a rule; but, compared with a Berlin droshky horse, he is a very Joe Miller,

among animals. There is a deep and abiding mournfulness about the latter quadruped that seldom fails to impart itself to him who hires a hack conveyance in Berlin with the purpose of saving time. An Irish friend, driving down the Linden with me one day, in one of the ramshackle old wind-traps that are called by a name which, on the banks of the Neva, is synonymous with a Mazeppa-like sort of locomotion, observed, as we jolted along, "Barring we stopped altogether, I don't see how we could go any slower than this." This may sound like a bull, but it aptly described, I assure you, the rate of our progress. The droshky horse has attained the minimum of speed consistent with physical movement, and is, moreover, the most sorrowful-looking creature in the universe. To deck him with bells is indeed a mockery. His every stumble is announced by a merry chime; he tinkles as he halts, and peals when he falls down. Those who derive their notions of sledging from picture galleries or illustrated books of travel, and desire to be disillusionised, should go to Berlin while the snow is on the ground. I never yet saw a picture or engraving that had for its subject a sleighing party, in which fiery horses were not represented as dragging an elegant vehicle on skates through space at a terrific gallop, although tightly reined in by an aristocratic person enveloped in furs. Their wild career may be regulated but cannot be hindered by steel and leather. Whoop! halloo! they bound, they rush, they seem to fly, flecking their glossy coats with foam as white as the snow which their flashing hoofs cast up behind them in heavy flakes. Thus Art, editing Commonplace gracefully and agreeably: and such

is—such ever will be—my ideal of sleighing. A sledge ought to be beautiful in form, light of construction, and rather swan-like than otherwise; it ought to be whirled along over the smooth surface of the snow at the rate of twenty miles an hour or so, by three impetuous steeds harnessed abreast, guided by a stalwart driver, bearded like the pard, clad in a long fur-edged caftan, hip boots, a scarlet sash, and a black velvet Geneva bonnet bound with gold cord. It is not so, however, as a rule; indeed, very much not so. The real thing, as seen in the Thiergarten and Linden Avenue after a heavy snowfall, differs from the ideal thing in every possible respect, so far as its accessories are concerned. Both are sledges; but that is the only characteristic they have in common.

Let me try to limn in words a typical Berlin sledge. A square punt-like box, the bottom of which is about six inches from the snow, is fastened on two stout wooden bars curved like inverted carriage-shafts; inside, two leather-covered seats, and a rough horsecloth for the knees of the "fare." On the box, which is level with the said seats, a gloomy-visaged being sits, in blue camlet, with an indefinite number of futile capes, and a tall, glazed, chimney-pot hat bearing on its front a huge brass number at once staring and ghastly. Before him is a weird and wizened quadruped, of shattered constitution, whose legs are mere figures of speech, slack in the loins, heavy-headed, and apparently broken-hearted —generally a cast cavalry troop-horse, out of which a conscientious and thrifty Administration has taken all the "go" worth mention before selling it for three or four pounds to a purveyor of locomotion. Very old,

feeble, and down upon his luck is that unhappy beast; true, he is never overdriven, for his Jehu invariably allows him to moon along at his leisure; but even the wambling stagger which he conscientiously performs when called upon for an effort appears to cost him painful exertion. Droshky horses grunt, and well they may, poor wretches! They had a pretty rough time of it when they were "in the service:" they began troop work when they were three-year-olds, before their spines were thoroughly stiffened; they slaved away for seven or eight years, with as few holidays as the soldiers who successively bestrode them; and, when age and infirmity came upon them, unfitting them for regimental duty, instead of being pensioned like two-legged warriors, or mercifully converted into ruddy and toothsome sausage, they were transferred to new owners, who made them work from twelve to sixteen hours out of the twenty-four, and gave them just enough of food to keep body and soul together. It may fairly be doubted whether a Prussian horse of plebeian extraction ever enjoys a full "blow-out" of oats from the day of his birth to that of his death; unless, indeed, he has been fortunate enough to take part in a campaign in an enemy's country. A droshky suits his appearance—*equus* and equipage are worthy of each other; but in a sledge, associated as is that vehicle with ideas of velocity, space-devouring, and earth-spurning, he is a dismal anomaly.

CHAPTER V.

SPANISH CHARACTERISTICS.—A MADRID TELEGRAPH-OFFICE.—SHERRY TOWN.—LIFE IN ANDALUSIA.—A FRUIT MARKET.

Between Roumania and Spain there are many striking resemblances. One of these is, curiously enough, the national passion for turning night into day. Separated from one another by the main bulk of a whole continent, practically ignorant of one another's existence, following different creeds, and subject to different physical and climatic conditions, the descendants of the Latin race maintain certain customs in common—one of which is what the Americans happily term "loafing" about street corners and in hot coffee-rooms during those hours which the German and Anglo-Saxon races spend between the sheets. To refresh yourself for the labours of the ensuing day by a fair share of sleep o'nights is, it may plausibly be averred, unnecessary in countries to which real hard work is unknown; and the majority of the well-dressed Spanish population (I purposely avoid the term "middle classes," as the middle class, properly so called, does not exist in Spain, or in Moldo-Wallachia) have neither the facilities nor the desire to gain their bread, save by the sweat of somebody else's brow. However this may be

(and I fear it is too true), there can be no disputing the fact that, between the hours of twelve and four in the morning, the Spaniards and Roumans of cities are as lively and as busy (doing nothing) as possible, thronging the cafés to suffocation, and talking with a fire and illustrativeness of gesticulation that would lead you to believe them to be the most earnest, restless, passionate people on the face of the earth. You shall, however, meet the same men, whose volubility and apparent energy partly deafened, partly electrified you in the small hours, about two of the afternoon, sauntering languidly after their unsavoury breakfast of bull-beef, oily beans, and cigarette, down the Alcalá or Calle Geronimo, on their road to the Prado, the club, or the houses of their friends' wives, looking as sallow, dull, and nerveless as if they were suffering from jaundice or jungle fever. They have not been up an hour—they have swallowed down their unwholesome food with the rapidity of men eating for a wager. I don't think they have washed themselves *much;* and they are going to pass their day in utter idleness, so as to pick themselves up for the heavy yet congenial fatigues of the evening and night, which they will get through partly in the theatre, and very considerably indeed in the coffee-house. Outside these establishments are swarms of beggars, some curled up close to the wall, on the cold, hard pavement; others, loud-tongued and importunate for alms, dogging you up and down, round and round the Plazas, until, in sheer weariness of their whine and disgust at their proximity, you give them a few cuartos to be rid of them. After nightfall is their best time, for then there is no police to inter-

fere with them; and people, emerging from a warm café and a warmer political discussion, are apt to be susceptible of the contrast between the misery of these unfortunates and their own comparatively comfortable state. I do not know whether the indolence and idleness of those who give be not more discouraging to the hopes of Spain than the abject degradation of those who receive.

I incline to believe that nothing impresses an Englishman, visiting the Spanish capital for the first time, more unfavourably than the Madrid creep, about as melancholy a gait as that of a three-legged dog. It is not exactly a creep neither, but rather a loose-kneed shuffle, which may be said to express the various evils from which the Madrileños suffer—bad, scanty food, want of muscular development, over-poisoning by bad tobacco consumed excessively, indigestion, laziness, and a climate which, like Jerrold's historical baby, is "better conceived than described." This shuffle, I should say, exclusively characterises the men; as for the women, they walk well, look strong and healthy, and are, in every visible respect, far finer animals than their lords and masters. In the first place, they do not smoke. It is, I believe, vaguely believed in England—I know it is in Germany—that Spanish women are as keen on their cigarettes as Spanish men. This, however, is not so. Cuban creoles, and women of Spanish extraction in South America, blow, or rather inhale, their 'baccy as freely as may be; but the home-bred daughter of Iberia is as abstinent in the matter of smoke as she is ravenous in that of garlic. Now, little boys of six and upwards may be seen any

day in hundreds smoking about the streets of any Spanish town; the exception is an infant that has not got a *suave* stuck in the corner of his mouth. These children all consume their own smoke, too; that is, they draw every atom of it into their lungs, which, accordingly, get curiously pickled in a few years—only the pickling does not act as a preservative, far from it. Upon lungs made ready for disease, if not absolutely damaged in this manner, the *norte* comes in due time with his barbed breath—nothing has been done meanwhile to strengthen the lad's constitution by wholesome food, plentiful ablutions, and active exercise; and it is not to be wondered at, on the whole, that the young men who survive the tremendous ordeal to which their powers of vitality have thus been subjected are pitiable and degraded specimens of humanity. Every adult Madrileño with whom I was acquainted during my residence on the banks of the Manzanares was afflicted by a chronic hacking cough, the result of unlimited cigarettes and of the atmosphere, aptly described in the well-known local proverb as "so subtle."

The Spaniards are even more rabid emplecmaniacs than the Italians or the Russians; nor can it be denied that their evil fortune and the conditions in which they have been born and bred, as well as their own natures, have made them what they are. As a nation, they have been brought up in the way they should not go, and must undergo a long apprenticeship to independence ere they can rid themselves of the slavish manner of thought that has been persistently taught them. Their moral character has sustained a subtle taint of the agency,

protracted over many years, of an infamous system. A Castilian prides himself upon being, and intensely believes himself to be, *muy hombre de bien;* but his *point d'honneur*—which, though it undoubtedly exists, is so difficult of detection by a foreigner—does not prevent him from intriguing, cringing, and bribing for place, or from pinning implicit faith in the dogma that the public interest must, and ought, to be entirely subservient to his own. Power, with its concomitant profit, is what he yearns for before all else; and its unscrupulous exercise does not shock him; for he has been, not only throughout his own life, but in the traditions of his history, accustomed to see it perverted to bad uses by the passions or weaknesses of those to whom it has been confided. When Ferdinand VII. was king, he indulged from time to time in acts of extravagant atrocity; and whenever he perpetrated some violation of private rights or public decency of a worse than ordinary character, people exclaimed with vehement approval, "Carajo! es mucho Rey!" (Hang it! he is a king, and no mistake!) Their sympathies were all with him; for not a man amongst them, had he been king, but would have availed himself of the royal privilege to be fearlessly vicious. Narvaez was not generally hated in Spain, although he massacred his political opponents so remorsely that when, on his deathbed, he was exhorted by the attendant priest to invoke the forgiveness of his enemies, he grimly muttered, "There would be little use in my doing that, for there is not one alive to pardon me. I have had them all shot." His ferocious manliness won him the fear of the Spaniards, and, consequently, their respect. They are a

people of strange contradictions; and one can only hope that their worser characteristics may be modified by the new influences which have of late years been brought to bear upon them.

Perhaps it may interest my readers to be made acquainted with the manner in which business is conducted in the central telegraphic office at Madrid—an establishment considered by Spaniards to have been brought up to a high standard of efficiency. I will suppose that it is necessary for me to forward a piece of news by wire to London in the evening, and will ask my readers to accompany me to the head office, and be present during the whole operation. The Palacio de la Gobernacion is a large, dirty, vulgar-looking building, occupying the best part of one whole side of the Puerta del Sol. Let us cross the great Plaza, thronged with loungers of both sexes, though the Guadarramas are capped with snow, and the killing wind that cuts through broadcloth and fur as though they were gauze and silver paper, is chilling the city with its icy breath. But the Madrileños must lounge, be the weather what it will; and so, despite the piercing cold, they linger about in groups, puffing the ever-renewed cigarette, and closely wrapped up in cloaks of the genuine bandit pattern. If, in passing along Madrid streets, when the *norte* has set in, you allow yourself to be influenced in your impressions of the persons you meet by traditions of the Adelphi or transpontine schools, you will assuredly believe that the male inhabitants of this city all walk about in an attitude implying perfect readiness to "plant the assassin blow" between the shoulders of the first person they may happen

to take a dislike to; for the right arm is generally worn crossed over the left breast, as if grasping a cuchillo or Albacete snickersnee; whereas the attitude in question is, in reality, only assumed for the purpose of keeping the cloak, the right extremity of which is cast over the left shoulder, in its place. Some of these cloaks are gorgeously lined with violet, puce, or purple velvet, and one of the arts of wearing the *manta* is to throw it round you so that a small portion of this rich lining may be shown, not ostentatiously but naturally; the greater number, however, are simply lined with scarlet cloth, and those worn by the poorer classes with a sort of frieze —whilst the beggars are draped in a striped material, much like an English horsecloth, but neither so warm nor so handsome. Poor wretches! it is often, with a desperately ragged pair of breeches, their only covering from the bitter blast. Hurrying past these unfortunates, with a muttered "Pardon me, gentlemen, for the love of God," the only phrase that will silence a Spanish mendicant's importunity, we enter the Palacio by a high gloomy portal, totally unlighted, and flanked by a couple of sentry boxes, before which two exiguous "liners" are blowing their fingers and shivering. Up a few broad stone steps, and we come to a huge, dismal, dark courtyard, round which a sort of pillared cloister runs. In the middle of this court stands a dim object, something like an Egyptian god or a stunted obelisk, seen from a distance. This is a kiosque, however, of which and its *raison d'être* more hereafter. Stumbling at every step over holes in the paving or corners of slabs that stick up on end to overthrow us, we grope round the stone

arcade, until we come to the main guard of the Milicia Ciudadana, between which and a Wallachian or Bulgarian gipsy encampment there is no difference that I can perceive. These wild, picturesque-looking fellows have made their fire of sticks on the stone floor of the court-yard, and are cooking some pottage with a redoubtable smell in an obese iron pot hanging from a three-legged "convenience," in form resembling a dock shears. One swarthy, Moorish-looking youth, with a thick, straight, black moustache, and bare, brown, sinewy arms and legs, is leaning on his rifle, the barrel and bayonet of which gleam faintly under the dull red light of the wood embers; he is majestically enveloped in a flowing *manta*, the gaudy colours of which are softened down by the half-darkness; his comrades are crouched round the fire, too cold and hungry to talk much, but patiently waiting with eager faces for the moment when the compounder of the puchero shall pronounce it to be sufficiently stewed. Let us ask the caballero in the horsecloth, whom I shrewdly suspect of being the *cordon bleu* of the party, our way to the telegraph office. He salutes us courteously, and explains that it is situate at the end of this corridor; then turn to the right and go straight on —"it cannot be missed." Whilst he is informing us, some irrepressible patriot lifts the lid of the cauldron, and a gush of garlic rushes forth that is too much for our equanimity—away, away, in the pursuit of our quest, with the horrible perfume following us, like an avenger, hard at heel. At last we reach the bourne of our desires—a long, low, frowsy room, furnished with a grimy table and half a dozen low four-legged stools:

behind a glass screen are four clerks and a boy, with whom you must communicate, if you can get them to listen to you, through tiny semicircular trap-doors, so small that you must double up your telegram form before you can pass it in to the officials. We write our messages, and project them skilfully through one of the holes. After a minute or two's calm reflection, relieved by the confection of a fresh cigarette, one of the clerks approaches and picks up the forms. We ask him what is the charge for two simple messages to London. He returns no answer, but scans the messages suspiciously and repeatedly, as if he smelt treason in every letter. Again we inquire the price of transmission. He looks up at us with an impressive glance, "fixes" us for a few seconds, and then turns away towards his three colleagues and the boy, with whom he holds a whispered conclave that outlasts our patience. Presently we repeat our question angrily; upon which everybody proceeds to take down books of different shapes and sizes, and refer back to find out the approximate tariff, as we fancy. It takes four men and a strong boy, all servants of the company, and employed at its chief office in the capital of Spain, six minutes by Shrewsbury clock to discover, in the archives of the establishment, the cost of transmitting a telegraphic message to London. At last one clerk advances, and informs you, in a hesitating manner, that the fee is "ciento y viente reales" (about one pound five), which you produce, of course, and tender, in the hope of terminating the transaction. No such luck; the clerk, with a stately gesture, waves back the money, and tells you that you must purchase stamps for the amount,

and affix them to the form. "Stamps! But where? Mother of God, where? Will you sell them to me?" By this time your patience has quite expired, and your brain is beginning to whirl round in your head. "No, Señor, we cannot sell them; that is not our province; but you can buy them in the kiosque outside, in the middle of the court." This, then, is the use and meaning of that mysterious structure. We rush out, batter at a dull window of the kiosque, and succeed in waking up a man in a felt cap, who is quite overwhelmed at the magnitude of the order we give him, and cannot make up his mind, even after counting the desired stamps over and over about thirty times, that he is not losing heavily by their transfer to our hands. At last we get them, and return to the office, where we hand them to the clerk who has undertaken our business. He inspects them at his leisure, and presently observes, with a touch of sadness in his voice, "I deplore, Caballero, that I cannot take these." "But, Señor, in the name of the seven thousand imps that tortured Saint Anthony, why not? You told me to buy stamps for a hundred and twenty reals; I have bought them; I have paid for them; here they are; why, oh why, can you not accept them? Give me my receipt and let me go, invoking choice benedictions on your very appreciable—*muy apreciable*—head?" "Because, let your worship observe, there are two telegrams, are there not? Well, the stamps offered by you, in the aggregate sufficient for both, are separately either more or less in amount than corresponds to the tax ordained; they are not divisible by two. Your worship must exchange them for others of a more manageable

character!" Of course you have to submit; and, if you be a "special" newspaper correspondent, bring the matter at last to an end with the consoling reflection that, after all this pottering about, loss of time, and irritation, your telegram will probably reach London several hours after your morning edition has gone to press, and that your hope of anticipating your deadly foe Reuter, by a few hours, is entirely frustrated.

One of the many *désillusionnements* to which travellers are subjected in the course of their wanderings is, that, as soon as they arrive at a place hitherto known to them only by its association with something of surpassing excellence, edible, potable, or otherwise consumable, so soon do they discover that the article for the production of which the place in question is renowned is not to be found there at all, or is procurable only at an exorbitant price and of inferior quality. In some particular spots of such adventitious renown, the articles identified with their names are not even known by the inhabitants—that is, as specialities by which they have gained honour and repute. That such things are the natives may, or may not, be aware; but that their confection, or growth, has anything to do with the place from which they take their name does not seem to be a necessary consequence of their nomenclature. For instance, Parmesan cheese is known at Parma, but not one atom of it is made in that city. It is called Parmegiano, truly; but, if my memory serve me right, Lodi, which is a good long way from Parma, produces it all. I have never drunk worse or dearer claret than at Bordeaux. The oil of Lucca is quite as unpalatable, *chez elle*, as the oil of the Romagna, which

is saying a good deal. At Ostend the indigenous oysters are coarse, coppery, and cost threehalfpence a piece. You may trudge all through Toledo's painful, kidney-paved streets in a vain search for a blade of that ilk; and, curiously enough, the knives with which, by a stretch of generous romance on the part of the *hôtelier* and his staff, you are expected to cut your food in the Fonda de Lino (which I fearlessly assert to be the worst place of entertainment in the world) are cast in one piece, handle haft, and blade, with just as much edge about the one as the other; so that, as the beef supplied to you, if you be unwary enough to call for that sort of meat, has all the appearance of having been hewed from between the horns of some præhistoric bull, you have as much chance of dividing your steak or *filet* into convenient sections with your Toledo blade as you would have of slaying a rhinoceros with a blunt pin. Turkish tobacco is at its very worst in Constantinople. I never saw a Strasbourg pie at Strasbourg. Brighton fish may be summed up in the words of the immortal Bailey: "Don't eat none of 'em;" and—to come to the fact that suggested the foregoing list of similar anomalies, which might easily be swelled to formidable dimensions—Jerez is about the last place in the world where the man who loves good sherry should call for that liquid in any hotel—even in that one which has been christened after the generous wine dear to Englishmen. I thought that I had drunk of the deepest cup of humiliation in the way of sherry whilst I was a denizen of the Fonda de Londres in Seville, where the vintage bearing that name was a miraculous mixture of fire and water; but I find that I was

wrong. There is a yet more deadly draught to be purchased at the Fonda de Jerez in the town of that name. Moreover, one has the proud privilege of paying six shillings and a penny per bottle for it—a price for which honest, cheering sherry may, I believe be drunk within the limits of a certain tight little island. *Apropos* of the Fonda de Londres, I cannot forbear mentioning a new reading of bitter beer, culled from the wine-card of that establishment. For ingenuity of perversion I think it deserves honourable mention. At the tail of the list, after "Cirswaser" and "Miroquini" have suffered a Seville change from their proper titles, comes "Pall-Halle," a beverage somewhat difficult of recognition under its new denomination.

But there *is* sherry in Jerez—which, by the way, may be spelt "Xerez," or "Gerez" for that matter, for *j g* and *x* are all pronounced alike before *e* and *i* in Spanish, and the Spaniards are not particular to a shade in orthography—sherry that makes a man smack his lips, wink joyfully, and seriously revolve the pros and cons of taking up his permanent residence in a country that yields so divine a liquid. You may grate, you may poison this tongue as you will, but the taste of that sherry will stick to it still. Armed with credentials from kindly friends in Madrid and Seville—much good sherry be their dole!—I presented myself one morning at the Palace of Don Pedro Domecq, in the Larga, and was straightway invited to inspect that gentleman's *bodega*, or wine-cellars, situate in the Plaza San Ildefonso. But, before I ask my readers to accompany me thither, let me attempt a description of an Andalusian

gentleman's house, unrivalled, I think, in many respects for comfort, convenience, and elegance by any class of mansions in Europe. It is built either of brick, faced with pale green or cream-coloured stucco, or of solid white stone, and its walls are of enormous thickness, so constructed with a view to keep out the tremendous summer heat which, in Southern Spain sometimes attains, during the months of July and August, 120 deg. in the shade, and keeps that figure up for weeks. It is flat-roofed, after the good old Oriental custom still followed in Genoa and some other Italian cities, where, as in Southern Spain, the roof is an evening resort, a lounge, a flirtation place, a spot of assignation, *que sais-je?* Its lower windows are sternly barred, like those of Florentine palaces; but the bars are wide enough apart to admit the passage of a soft hand, that is rapturously mumbled over in the small hours by a sallow-faced, dark-bearded gallant in a cloak, who has been prowling up and down the opposite side of the way for hours, in thrilling expectation of so sweet a reward for his patience. Much of the love-making is done at these windows, happily for youthful virtue defended with sufficient strength to withstand the extravagance of southern passions and the promptings of hot young blood. *Vidi tantum!* The outside of the house is not showy—may be, it stands in a narrow street, and numbers no more than two storeys; but when you approach the double iron gates, often gilded, and nearly always of a delicate and fanciful pattern, and peep through them into the patio, you begin to comprehend that within there is that which no London, Vienna, or Paris mansions can show.

The gates themselves hang in a deep-arched niche, adorned with Moorish devices in brilliant colours, sometimes a honeycomb of gold like the Sala de los Ambazadores in the Seville Alcazar; beyond them is a fairy picture of ferns, dwarf palms, banyans, and fountains, grouped on a pavement of black and white marble, and surrounded by a lofty, broad arcade of porphyry or jasper pillars. Beneath this arcade are ranged luxurious divans and sofas; and on the walls hang numbers of pictures and engravings, that suffer nothing from their sojourn in the open air. Some of these patios are roofed in with glass; the greater part, however, are covered by the bright blue sky alone; and in the ardent heats of summer the family lives in the patio exclusively, existence being impossible in the upper portion of the house. Here they eat, drink, chat, have music, take their siestas, and receive visits until bedtime, when they retire to their mosquito nets on the ground floor, in rooms never used during the winter. Round the patio are situate the 'servants' offices, the cool, dark-vaulted chambers in which hams, oil jars, fruit, and wine are kept—the bath-rooms, attainable by a small winding staircase from the upper floors, without crossing or skirting the patio—the huge filters, and the deep black well, with which every house is provided as a precaution against drought. From one side of the umbrageous court a broad marble staircase leads to the floors above. Tropical plants, in dark red flower-plots, adorn the landings. On the first floor are the winter reception and dining-rooms, handsomely furnished in the English style, and forming one noble suite of apartments, receiving abun-

dant light from the glass walls of the gallery that crowns the arcade of the patio. On the second floor are the winter bedrooms, linen stores, preserving rooms (the Spaniards are great at jams and *conserves*), the depôts of lumber and odds and ends of all sorts. Above these is the flat, balconied roof, a burning, fiery furnace during eight months of the year, but a pleasant, airy, family rendezvous during the other four. Such is the house of a wealthy gentlemen in Seville, Jerez, Cadiz, and most southern towns—such, with certain restrictions in respect of size, luxury, and decoration, are the houses of most well-to-do Andalusians.

The walk from the Larga to San Ildefonso is, for more than one reason, a distressing one. In the first place, the sun raps out his rays with such uncompromising vigour over the glowing little town that locomotion, save during the evening, is a painful ordeal. In the second place, because the by-ways and crooked paths of Jerez, through an infinity of which one must pass to reach M. Domecq's *bodega*, are studded—I dare not call it paved—with millions of cruel, hard-hearted little stones, which appear to have been planted wrong side up for the express purpose of tormenting that class of poor humanity which wears corns, and of grafting those agonising callosities on those, the elect of nature, theretofore not afflicted with them. Bruised feet, dislocated boots, and bad language are the results of a stroll through the side-streets of Jerez; they beat Belgrade, and I can say no worse of them. At last, however, our haven is reached, and we pass through a lofty archway into the great sanctuary of sherry. M. Domecq is one

of the largest growers and holders of this wine in Jerez; one of his vineyards covers 500 acres (each acre valued at £400 sterling), and his principal *bodega* contains 9,000 butts of wine fit for consumption. There is no cellarage in this depôt; the butts are stacked in immense lofty sheds paved with brick, so cool that coming suddenly into them from the hot outer air is like jumping out of an oven into an ice-pail. More than a hundred men are employed upon the premises, every article connected with the preparation of the wine for shipment being manufactured within the walls of the establishment, even to the carpenters' tools used in the cooperage, and the esparto mats forming the walls of the store-sheds. The *genus loci* of these latter when I visited them was an Englishman, Mr. George Renney, to whose kindness and courtesy I am much indebted; and under his guidance, accompanied by a stout Andalusian *sommelier*, exquisitely proud of his functions, I proceeded to inspect the sample-rooms, workshops, &c., and finally the huge wine stores of this mighty *bodega*. Presently the portly Andalusian detached from a hook a bunch of ancient keys, a delicate crystal gill, and a whalebone wand tipped with a tiny silver measure, and I was requested to taste a few of the curious and precious wines (some worth a thousand pounds a butt!) concealed in a locked division of the *bodega*, devoted to the more ancient and costly vintages. With a portentous clash of keys the portal of this precious Bacchic crypt was flung open, and three or four hundred venerable casks stood disclosed to my view. Some of them were distinguished by the names of famous men, painted

in large characters on their fair round bellies. I noticed "Napoleon," "The Duke of Wellington," "Nelson," "George IV.," "Fox," "Pitt," and last, though not least renowned, "Ruskin." The first butt into which the whalebone wand was dipped for my instruction and profit was "Napoleon," somewhat of an anachronism, inasmuch as the wine it held was pressed from the grape some sixty years before the First Consul was born. Its first birthday, I believe, took place in the autumn of 1716, and it enjoyed in 1868 a grand and honourable old age. Still very strong, it had become so dry, in the course of a century and a half, that it was more like an astringent than a wine; but what a colour, O generous Bacchus! and what a bouquet! My next introduction was to George IV., and I am bound to say that his Majesty was very sweet and gracious. Through the medium of the *sommelier* he proffered me some of his own peculiar tap, a Pedro Ximenes, deep-tinted and luscious beyond compare, over whose chestnut-hued body some eighty years had passed, every round of months adding richness to its hue. Next I called upon "Nelson," a rare Amontillado, turned deep golden with age. The wine was baptised when the hero died. "Fox," "Pitt," and "Wellington," were all different varieties of Amontillado, from fifty to seventy years old, "Ruskin" a more modern, but transcendant vintage. After paying my respects to all these worthies, I accompanied Mr. Renney over the various departments of the *bodega*, my attention being called by him, in passing the cask-washing yard, to the Hercules of the place, a gigantic Andalusian, brown, hairy, and of rugged linea-

ments, who at a pinch could raise a full butt of sherry from the ground to the third tier of casks! The admirable cleanliness and perfect order pervading every part of the establishment were delightful to contemplate, as well as the hearty and earnest manner in which every man was occupied with his work: such a contrast to the Spain I had left outside M. Domecq's gates, in which everybody seemed to be intent either upon "how not to do it," or upon "how to get somebody else to do it for him." After taking leave of my courteous entertainer and friendly guide, I visited the two clubs of Jerez—one a magnificent building, containing *salons* worthy of Pall Mall, and a patio that a prince might envy; the other, a comfortable, cosy institution, well stocked with English and French newspapers, billiard tables, and luxurious rocking chairs. In the plazas of Jerez grow giant palms, their feathery foliage gently stirred by soft breezes that hail from the Atlantic. The people are decently dressed and apparently well fed. There are fewer beggars than in any Spanish town with which I am acquainted. Foreign capital and foreign energy have done much for the town and its inhabitants. More than half the great merchants and shippers are Englishmen or Frenchmen.

The route to Cadiz from Jerez is very uninteresting. As soon as you get clear of the wine district, which extends in a radius of from five to six miles round the latter town, you plunge into a dreary district devoid of any inhabitants save rabbits and snipe, for it is nothing but alternate sandhills and swamp; and through this desolate tract runs your road right up to the walls of Cadiz,

a strongly fortified town, built on a narrow tongue of land projecting into the sea, and surrounded on three sides by salt water. On entering the town by the embattled and guarded gate that faces the railway station, you are practically made acquainted with the fact that the Gaditanos are remarkable for possessing that particular visual tendency commonly called "having an eye to the main chance." In Cadiz was initiated the September revolution; Cadiz was the first Spanish town that "pronounced;" Cadiz is asserted to be Republican to the core; but in November, 1868, Cadiz had not followed the example of Madrid, Seville, and fifty other important cities, in doing away with the vexatious yet profitable gate dues which subject harmless travellers to so much loss of time and annoyance. Heaps of ruins where, but a few weeks previously, stood piles of masonry, frowning arches, and vaulted chambers, in which every visitor to the capital of Andalusia was compelled to submit his belongings to a severe scrutiny, attested the sincerity of the Sevillanos in their adoption of sweeping reforms; but the approaches to Cadiz were still strenuously beset by the carabiñeros or Custom-house officers, and not a mouse was allowed to enter the town without having its portmanteau and hat-box opened and routed inside out, in search of articles subject to octroi. Altogether, the impressions conveyed to a stranger by his first hour's sojourn in Cadiz are far from agreeable. Arrived at the station, he looks in vain for a porter to take charge of his hand-bag, rugs, &c., and aid him in obtaining his heavier impedimenta. It takes him half an hour, and costs him a good deal of money, to get

his luggage delivered, and the men who carry it to the omnibus do not scruple to insist upon being paid two shillings apiece for conveying it a distance of five yards. The tariff, it appears, is a peseta, surely an excessive charge for so small a service, amply recompensed in England by a voluntary sixpence; and base, therefore, is he considered who presumes to offer less than a scudo, or twice and a half the prescribed fee. At last your traps are comfortably lodged in the omnibus, and you console yourself for the *mauvais quart d'heure* you have just gone through by the thought that you will be driven straight to your hotel, there to enjoy the tub of coolness and the breakfast of succulence. You have not been jolted along more than a hundred yards, ere you are pulled up under a grim portcullis and ordered to alight, whilst your effects are torn from their resting-place and spirited away out of your sight. You say to yourself, gloomily, "Cosas de España," and hope that everything will turn up all right. Presently a very dirty man in a long blue coat and baggy red breeches beckons you from a low arched door, and demands your keys in anything but a pleasant tone of voice. You obey his signal, and enter a long, dark apartment, which, for squalor and absolute filthiness, I will back against a Moldavian *chrishma*, the forecastle of a Greek merchant vessel, or the interior of a Roman citizen's private dwelling. In one corner is a bed, eminently calculated to murder sleep; in another, a greasy, sloppy table, with a stratum of dirt upon its surface as thick as an old penny piece. The floor is made of clay, superficially wavy, and covered with countless abominations. The dim and uncertain light pervad-

ing this apartment—the very sight of which would break the heart of a Dutch *mevrouw* say, from Brock—filters into it through a narrow grated window, scarcely more than a slit in the massive wall of the gate tower. You find your luggage cast down anyhow on the earthen floor, and an attenuated fowl frantically picking at the padlock of your dressing-case, which she evidently regards as some sort of enormous cereal, and, with the desperate obstinacy characterising her kind, is determined to devour, or perish in the attempt. You deliver up your keys to the dirty carabiñero, and he, and more like him, turn to with a will to grope amongst your clothes, and unsettle every article belonging to you from its appointed place. No Russians were ever rougher—no Papal doganieri ever more careless or inconsiderate. You stand by, swallowing your disgust and endeavouring to suppress your fury, whilst your clean shirts are being dragged from their stronghold at the bottom of your portmanteau. You see one tail of your dress-coat trailing in the indescribable horrors of the floor, your boots scattered recklessly about, the contents of your glove-box showered out amongst your papers, and even your sponge-bag untied and emptied, in the conviction that something contraband must be lurking within it. The whole search is transacted with a mixture of savage gusto and ingenuity in producing disorder and damage that is beyond measure irritating. It is just as though a couple of huge monkeys were rummaging your boxes for the love of the sheer mischief they could do. Nor does the appearance of the carabiñeros belie the illusion. When the investigation is declared to be at an end, and,

rising from their knees, the dirty ones betake themselves to the disorganisation of somebody else's property, leaving you to repack your *disjecta membra* as best you may, you look at the chaos before you, and feel like Marius amongst the ruins of Carthage, only a good deal angrier. Black thumbs have been planted in the bosoms of dress shirts and white waistcoats, a whole grimy hand has printed itself off upon a pair of light trousers hitherto spotless, immaculate white neckties have been rolled up into a lump and stuffed into a corner with slippers and a clothes-brush. I thought I should never get rid of the fleas strewn amongst my garments by those foulest of carabiñeros. Neither brushing nor shaking could dislodge them from their places of vantage. I was doomed thenceforth to their company on my travels in Spain! In the pleasing manner feebly described above—for no words can paint the exasperation of the sufferer, or the ape-like *insouciance* of the operators—was spent my first hour in Cadiz; nor did my subsequent experiences at the Hôtel de Cadiz deepen my admiration of the manners and customs obtaining amongst the Gaditanos. Let no one who is not prepared to rough it, in an enlarged sense of the expression, put up at the stately edifice that commands such a cheerful prospect of the Plaza de San Antonio. There are no bells to the rooms; the doors will not shut save by superhuman effort, and when shut defy the most passionate efforts to open them again; the windows cannot be closed, so that you have to sleep in a fresh breeze; the only stove or fireplace in the house is that at which are cooked the horrible messes supplied to you at meal times; and there is not a newspaper, book,

pianoforte, billiard room, or any other means of recreation whatever within the precincts of the establishment.

In traversing Castile the observant traveller's mind is likely to be distracted by the question, ever recurring and never solved—not even by the exhaustive Ford—whether that ancient kingdom was named after the soap which it resembles so exactly, or whether the soap, with which we were forcibly made familiar on the Saturday nights of childhood's sunny days, took its title from Castile. Very brown indeed is Castile—about the brownest part of Europe I have had the pleasure of visiting. For a hundred miles round Madrid, which lies as nearly as possible in the very centre of Spain and of both Castiles, the country, if I may call it so, has an appearance at once bilious and mangy. Nothing seems to grow upon it, save here and there a casual, weak-constitutioned olive-tree; it is utterly dried up, so that if you obstinately resolve to discover the rivers marked on the maps, you may perhaps, with much pains and labour, find out a pint or two of dirty water lurking amongst a few thousand tons of loose stones, but nothing more. A lively specimen of Spanish rivers, for instance, is the Manzanares, upon whose banks the capital is built, and which the Madrileños are obliged to *water* every year in the summer season, as otherwise it would suffocate them all with its dust. Fancy the citizens of a town being choked by the dust of their river! Were I to write thirty truthful chapters about Spain, I could tell my readers nothing more thoroughly Spanish than this fact. When a strong east wind gets up early in the morning, somewhere about the end of July—one of the worst of the

meses de los infiernos—the people say to one another, "Now we shall have a dose of the Manzanares," and the municipality busies itself with the gathering together of water-carts wherewith to give that river a sound drenching, and avert, or at least mitigate, the threatened dust-storm. On the route towards Andalusia, as far as the northern side of the Sierra Morena, the view from both sides of the railway extends over a series of desolate undulations, as barren of population as they are of herbage, and between Madrid and Castillejos, a decayed hamlet from which Prim took the name of his marquisate, the whole face of the land is covered by loose stones. The district in question is not unlike part of the Karst, wanting, however, the bold outline and grim greyness of that phenomenal range. Nothing grows upon it save crows, and how those voracious birds manage to pick up a decent living from such a petrified desert is more than I can understand. There they are, however, in vast numbers, and I have too much respect for the intelligence of the crow to believe that he would frequent any place unless there were something highly satisfactory to be got out of it. Once I saw a party of peasants making believe to be engaged in agricultural pursuits not far from the line of rails. Four of them were piling up stones in a heap; two more were trifling with a large sieve, which one was languidly filling from the heap of stones, whilst the other shook it, so that the little stones fell through and the big ones remained. Two bullocks, with a thing attached to their bodies that must have been meant for a plough, were "standing by," in Captain Cuttle's sense of the phrase, talking to one another

confidentially, as idle bullocks will do—I suppose in pure Castilian. As the train crawled up towards this party, all connected with the operations in hand left off pretending to work, rolled and lit their cigarettes, and stood scowling at the emblem of progress—precious slow progress, too !—as it puffed past them. Now this little Georgic episode puzzled me considerably, especially the plough; for you might as well have tried to plough the Strand or the Nelson Column as that tract of broken up rock; and, after much reflection, I came to the conclusion that the efforts of the agriculturists in question must have been directed towards the achievement of one of two objects—either they were systematically removing the stones with the purpose, or in the hope, of arriving ultimately at an earthy surface, or they were sifting the stones in the hope of obtaining, by trituration, a sufficient quantity of earth upon which eventually to cultivate something. Judging from the appearance of the spot they were employed upon, as well as from the manner of their labour, I should say that in a couple of hundred years or so they might have attained something like success in the realisation of either project. Meanwhile they were quite right and prudent, of course, to keep the plough and bullocks ready to hand, in order that they might not have the trouble of fetching them whenever there might be anything to plough. The last I saw of them was that they had struck staring, by common consent, and had squatted down in a circle round the large heap of stones, to smoke at their ease and talk about the train. An American gentleman sitting by me, who was quite broken-spirited with the country and the people,

observed, "Why, sir, those tawny cusses may go on picking up and sifting those eternal stones right down to the kernel of this universal earth before they'll find a pinch of soil big enough to grow a head of garlic on, *and then they won't.*" I think he was right. But one must not be surprised at anything in Spain.

Apropos of garlic, I crave pardon for a short digression. It has, I believe, never yet been decided whether garlic be the root of all evil, or merely a skid upon the wheel of civilisation. At any rate, it is the curse of Spain. I had deemed myself sufficiently familiar with garlic, through Italian and Provençal experiences, to pass an examination in the abominations derived from that plant with credit and honour; but I was mistaken. Until I came to Spain I had really no idea whatever of garlic, its properties and abuses. To say that the Spanish nation is thoroughly impregnated with it is but to hint delicately at the extent of its dominion over that unhappy people. I remember a charming French friend of mine who used, now and again, to give himself a great treat of *gigot* stuffed with garlic; after which meal he would drink a few glasses of *tafia*, smoke a cigarette or two of *caporal*, and then call upon me and invariably kiss me. His breath was attar of roses or Ess. Bouquet compared to the person of an average Spaniard. By an extravagant and continuous consumption of garlic, these people, men and women, get it into their skins. From their skins it passes into their clothes, so that they walk about in a small personal atmosphere of garlic indescribably sickly and sickening. A Spanish gentleman remarked to me one day in a Madrid salon, whilst praising English-

women, their beauty, virtues, &c., "There is only one fault that I detected in them—their skin has no perfume. When I kiss a Spanish lady's hand, I smell that delicious national odour that we all adore; but an English lady's hand, though delicately white and soft, does not absolutely smell of anything!" He missed, poor fellow, the taint of garlic, which infects almost every human being in the Peninsula. I have travelled a good deal at night about Spain; they never put fewer than eight persons in a compartment which will comfortably hold four, and I have enjoyed the privilege of being one of thirteen through a long night's journey. Everybody except myself exuded garlic from every pore all the way. The windows were closed—it was a hot night! One might as well have sate in an *olla podrida*, or in that still worse conglomerate of nastiness, a *puchero*. Depend upon it that Spain will never be a great and prosperous nation till its sons and daughters give up their loathsome diet *à l'ail* for one more solid and less offensive. "Abajo el ajo!" should be the motto of all true Iberian patriots; for garlic forms a barrier—unseen, but alas! not unsmelt—against foreign enterprise and capital, of a far more formidable character than that constituted either by the Pyrenees or the sea.

I happened to be travelling in Andalusia whilst Castelar was starring that province as a Republican propagandist in the late autumn of 1868, and met him at a small station between Alicante and La Encina, where the sovereign people was far too wildly enraptured with the sound of its own shouting to give him a chance of making a speech; so he was compelled to confine his

share in the proceedings to vigorous though unintelligible patriotic pantomime, and the last I saw of him was his hat, as he was swept down the dusky road that leads from the Estacion to the town, hustled and shoved onwards by as sweet a lot of dirty and ragged loafers as could well be gathered together in any Spanish city—which is saying a good deal. When I got to La Encina, one of those agreeable places in which one changes for everywhere, as the train appointed to convey me to Valencia was not more than an hour and a half behind time in starting, I had an opportunity for a somewhat protracted chat with the lessee of the refreshment department, a remarkably intelligent Frenchman, whose *recueil* of "Spanish Notes" appeared to be inexhaustible. He gave me a funny account of the hospitality with which the Alicante Republican committee had entertained the hero of the day, who arrived at Encina at mid-day ("the hour of breakfast to the fork, *hein?*"), after travelling all night with less comfort than sleep, and less food than either. "They embrace him—mon Dieu, how they embrace him! They draw him, panting with impulse generous, into my establishment. They force him affectionately into a chair —he smile, for he think he receive a repast—my word! They command to him a cup of chocolate and a glass of cold water! His figure lengthens; but he eats his chocolate; yes, and he drinks his water, whilst they address him compliments *longs comme ça!* I—I laugh under my counter; but I laugh sadly too; for I only get three francs for the whole ovation they offer him. The others, they all drink a little water—it was not an affair! As he go away so popular, so hungry, I think, *si j'étais lui,*

je me ficherais pas mal d'un pareil accueil! For I never heard that the Republicanism was a thing nourishing!" This restaurateur recounted to me an incident so deliciously illustrative of the way they manage things in Spain that I cannot resist the temptation of repeating it. "Yesterday, *voyez-vous*, the mail train from Madrid he arrive four hours late, and he find the Alicante train parted it was already three hours; so the employé of the post in charge of the mail-bags he bring them in here and put them down in a corner whilst they make up a special train for Alicante. Well, he smoke some cigarettes, drink some water, and talk much to Don Pedro, Don Luis, Don Cristobal, and all the other cavaliers of the administration. When the train is ready, he jump in and part for Alicante; but he take not his bags with him; no, he leave his *courrier* there, in that corner, where I find them more late! Do you think they wash him the head, at the post-office in Alicante, when he arrive the hands empty? Not at all. He say to them, 'I forgot the bags to-night; to-morrow they come all the same.' They say to him, '*Es bueno!*' and all the world couches himself! The people in Alicante cry for their letters; but that is their affair—all that the gentlemen at the post-office tell them is, 'Go you with God!' Nobody reclaims—to what good, then?"

One of the sights of Seville is the fruit market of the Incarnacion. It is an oblong square, covering more ground than Covent Garden, and, with the exception of one broad stone thoroughfare, dividing it into two sections, and an open paved way running right round it, is completely covered with whitewashed brick sheds, cool and

airy, through which you may take a delightful stroll, inhaling fragrant odours, and surrounded by a wealth of colour that would exhaust an artist's palette. From the beams and rafters above you hang long strings of onions, their glittering coats a bright reddish brown—festoons of scarlet and emerald pepper-pods—huge cocoa-nuts in their rhinocerontic outer shells—gourds of all shapes and hues—mighty cucumbers and choice melons in nets, hung up to ripen. To the right and left of your path are the stalls, small enclosures like cattle-pens; in the centre of each squats its proprietor, hedged in on all sides by piles of fruit. Great bags of chestnuts are poured out prodigally at his feet; round his head are clustered enormous bunches of grapes, hanging from the woodwork of his stall; pyramids of musk melons encompass him round about; deep baskets, overflowing with pomegranates tinted like the falling leaf, yellow and rosy apples, pimento and delicate milk-white onions, form the front bulwark of his stronghold; and close behind him, shielded by his body from the raids of adventurous, prowling *por-dios-señores* and boys, is a large osier pannier, half filled with soft hay, into which he throws, with a lofty and careless air, the coins you give him in exchange for his tempting commodities. A clumsy pair of scales dangles hard by, in which he weighs the ponderous melons and gleaming onions—the smaller fruits are sold by number, these and the peppers by weight. Of all the splendid objects displayed in his store, the only ones that fulfil their outward promise are the pomegranates, onions, and chestnuts; the rest are fair outside and disappointment within. Those golden

grapes, glowing with the hot kiss of the autumn sun, are little but skin and stones, the former being about as thick and tough as a kid glove. Those prodigious melons, dark green turned up with delicate yellow, are as insipid as weak sugar and water. Those peaches, big as cricket-balls, are as hard and as ungrateful to the palate; as projectiles in time of war, they might be useful—as comestibles, they are naught. Those lordly gilded apples, flecked with pink and crimson bars, are so many gaily clothed globes of pith. Spanish fruit, which, with ever so little care and cultivation, should be, by reason of the soil and climate, some of the finest in the world, is merely a delusion and a snare; it grows in accordance with the fanciful decrees of Dame Nature run wild, and, like many other untended products of this hapless country, hath a seemly exterior, *et voilà tout.* Lingering along the approaches to the market, and wistfully snuffing the highly-scented heaps lining their road, come companies of patient, ear-twitching donkeys, laden with bags of chestnuts and pimento packed in matting, and carelessly halloed along by a being who looks a much more ferocious beast than any of his convoy. He wears a short jacket of goatskin or sheepskin, the hair or wool outside, ragged breeches reaching to the middle of his thigh, and kept together by a sash, once red, in which is stuck a murderous snickersnee. His beard mixes with the tawny hair on his naked breast, blackened by the fierce sun; his head is swathed in a handkerchief brown with grease and dirt; and his feet are protected by toeless sandals, fastened round the ankle with leathern thongs. Beggars, afflicted with the most revolting

infirmities, dog your steps as you saunter through the arcades, and do their best—as indeed they do in every part of Spain—to spoil your enjoyment of the gay scene. At the rate of a cuarto to every four beggars, Rothschild or Erlanger would, after a short residence in this peninsula, be reduced to competition with their *bénéficiaires*. Walk once round the Puerta del Sol at Madrid, and you shall be importuned at least three hundred times for alms. Traverse the short distance between the Plaza de la Libertad and the Cathedral at Seville, and your heart shall be made sick with more harrowing appeals and awful manifestations of deformity and disease than the experience of a lifetime in England or France could afford you. Besides the genuine unfortunates that possess only too terrible claims to your compassion, there are hundreds of idle vagabonds of either sex whose mendicancy is a blot upon public decency.

CHAPTER VI.

LIFE IN BUCHAREST.

It has been assumed by an authoress of no mean capacity that the capital of Roumania is essentially a rollicking, dissipated, and agreeably immoral city, teeming with dangerous enchantments and exercising an irresistible fascination upon those strangers whom duty or chance has induced to sojourn within its gates. So vivaciously impressed was the gifted lady alluded to by the manifest charm of life in Bucharest, during her brief visit to the banks of the Dumbovitsa, that she christened it "The City of Pleasure," wrote a very lively and telling book about it, the only defect of which was that it lacked internal evidence to substantiate the aptness of its title, described the place and people in glowing terms, and slily but unmistakably conveyed to her readers the impression that, on the whole, Bucharest was "naughty but nice." The work in question made a decided hit, achieved the honours of translation into the French language, and was read eagerly in Roumanian society, with pride and gratification somewhat tempered by astonishment, but in nowise, I am bound to admit, marred by the fair word-painter's more than insinuation to the effect that the joys of Bucharest, constituting its chief attraction and entitling it to the designation of the Pleasure City *par*

excellence, were wicked joys, intrinsically meriting the reprobation of the moralist, but so delightfully wrapped up in a filmy, pliant veil of tolerance that even their more salient points of viciousness were scarcely perceptible at a casual glance, such as an average tourist is apt to cast at the institutions, manners, and customs of a foreign capital which he is visiting for the first time. Bucharest society, figurately speaking, was depicted in the "City of Pleasure" as a bed of bright-hued and aromatically-perfumed roses, under which lurked a perilous brood of tiny snakes, venomous truly, but with such brilliant eyes, like sparkling jewels, such decorative skins and such lithe graceful undulations as they glided hither and thither through the recesses of their fragrant couch, that a transient glimpse of them, from time to time, was wont to excite admiration rather than to provoke alarm.

A few plain truths respecting Bucharest, its alleged enchantments and real characteristics, set down dispassionately upon paper by one who has been free of Roumania in general, and its capital in particular, for more than twenty years past, may possibly prove not altogether uninteresting. I should perhaps, in order to justify my pretensions to write upon this subject *avec connoissance de cause*, premise that my acquaintance with the "scûmpa tseâra si frumôasa" now prospering exceedingly under Hohenzollern rule, dates from the remote epoch when John Alexander Cusa, most jovial of *viveurs* and astute of Hospodars, reigned over the United Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, first amalgamated into one homogeneous realm by his dexterous manipulation of rival aspirations and jealousies—that,

through long residence in both Principalities, during which every conceivable opportunity was generously afforded to me, officially and privately, of becoming familiar with the very penetralia of Roumanian society, I have acquired some knowledge of its habits—and that some slight services I had the good fortune to render to a most kindly, amiable, and hospitable people at an important conjuncture in its recent history have been deemed worthy of a national recognition far above their deserts. I have been made to feel at home in Roumania, that "dear and lovely land" as it is styled in Vasil Alecsandri's pathetic national hymn—its language and literature are well-nigh as familiar to me as my own—and I may therefore, perhaps, without presumption attempt to rectify some errors that have obtained European currency with respect to the leading features of life in its capital, where I have not only wintered, but spent two entire summers—a rare experience for a foreign visitor to the chief city of Modern Dacia.

Bucharest, although its population scarcely equals in number that of a third-rate German Residenz, or of a great metropolitan parish, is one of the largest towns in Christendom, as far as its mere territorial dimensions are concerned. The favourite boast of its inhabitants is that it covers as much ground as Paris; nor can those who thus vaunt the magnitude of its proportions be justly accused of any considerable exaggeration, for nine houses out of ten within its precincts are "detached residences," standing *entre cour et jardin*, a circumstance which not only accounts for its extraordinary size but renders intelligible the painful difficulties experienced by

foreigners in discovering the abodes of native acquaintances upon whom social obligations compel them to call —the evening, by the way, being generally accepted in Bucharest society as the most fitting time for exchanging courtesies of that particular class. With the solitary exception of the new Boulevard—a broad but brief thoroughfare sparsely flanked with public buildings—there is not a perfectly straight street in any part of the Roumanian capital. Even the most fashionable streets are as distractingly tortuous as they are apparently interminable. In this particular respect, Bucharest has preserved its Oriental character, gaining in picturesqueness what it loses in convenience. The numbering of the houses, too, is eccentric, not to say erratic; nor is the spelling of a street's name at one of its ends always identical with that adopted at the other, whilst both may haply exhibit startling variations from the orthography used towards the middle. Add to these perplexing conditions the fact that, save in a dozen or so of the principal thoroughfares, sidewalks are unknown to the streets of Bucharest, whilst their roadways are composed of casual stones, strewn about anyhow, without the least regard to size, shape, symmetrical arrangement, or even rudimentary adjustment, with every here and there a "soft place," that is, a mud-abyss in winter or rainy weather, and a dust-gulf in summer. To walk along these streets is anguish, to drive over them torture. Sprained ankles can hardly fail to accrue from the former method of locomotion; spinal dislocation may readily result from the latter. A round of calls in the fashionable quarter, performed in a swift *birja* driven at a hard

gallop by a burly, beardless Lipovan, who deems his professional honour involved in urging his spirited little steeds to the top of their speed when his fare is a "Bojar strainu," or foreign gentleman, generally causes that unfortunate individual to undergo an optical delusion consisting of several thousand highly luminous tadpoles flitting about in view of his mind's eye, to acquire a coppery taste in the mouth, and a dreadful buzzing, as of many choleric hornets, in his ears. The gaping chasms above alluded to are generally taken flying, a proceeding which seems to act telescopically upon his aching frame, either drawing it out until the distance between his head and his feet appears to be only computable in furlongs, or closing it together with such vehemence that the risk of being choked by his boots obtrudes itself irresistibly upon his overwrought imagination. If Bucharest be indeed a "City of Pleasures," most assuredly locomotion is not one of them.

As a matter of fact, life in Bucharest, even for those qualified by the most lavish boons of fortune, health, and good spirits to enjoy it, is singularly uneventful, decidedly monotonous—I will even go so far as to say, indisputably dull. Its amusements are curiously limited in number and ridiculously inferior in quality to those with which the capitals of Central and Western Europe abound. There is only one theatre worthy of the name, in which operatic performances are given during the winter season by scratch companies of fifth-rate singers who could not obtain a hearing in London, Paris, or Vienna. Every other year or so a travelling troupe of French all-round *artistes* turns up from Odessa,

Constantinople, or Pesth, and the *jeunesse dorée* of Bucharest revels during six or eight weeks in amazing renderings of Offenbach's and Lecocq's operettas, Sardou's and Dumas' dramas, and the more highly-spiced of the Palais Royal farces. It is deemed the correct thing by the young bloods of the Jockey Club, whilst these French strollers are dismally wading through their heterogeneous *repertoire*, to be *au mieux* with one or another of the raddled old "singing soubrettes" or "leading ladies" who ape the rôles of "bright particular stars" in these dim dramatic constellations. But there is a good deal more bragging than reality about these alleged *liaisons*—mere caricatures of profligacy—and no "curled darling" of Bucharest *salons*, sufficiently intimate with a foreigner to tell him the truth respecting a matter in which *amour propre* is involved, will attempt for a moment to persuade him that any of the joys, innocent or vicious, to be derived from the periodical sojourns of Italian singers or French actresses in the Roumanian capital, are to be reckoned amongst the local attractions assumed to have entitled it to universal fame as "The City of Pleasure."

In the way of private amusements and domestic recreations Bucharest is scarcely better off than she is with respect to entertainments of a public character. The arts are as yet but slenderly cultivated in Roumania, and the study of music, in particular, cannot be said to have advanced beyond the rudimentary stage. Few Roumanian ladies sing or play with any degree of proficiency; and my experience in Bucharest *salons*, to which musical performances are admitted as an element

of social diversion, have penetrated me with the conviction that there is not a single first-class pianoforte in the whole city. Even executants of real merit, like the Princess Jon Ghica, appear content to play upon second and third-rate instruments, whilst in the houses of wealthy Boyars whose names are historical landmarks, may be found objects bearing the aspect and dignified by the title of pianofortes, which, considered as mediums for the production of musical sounds, have no more affinity to a Bechstein or a Bluethner than a child's toy-fiddle has to a Stradivarius or an Amati. "A little music" seldom enters into the recreative programme of a Roumanian *soirée*, and its omission therefrom saves the chatty Boyars and Boyarins, whose resources in the way of political and personal small-talk are inexhaustible, from a great deal of irksome restraint and no little positive annoyance. During the season every "personage" of society who can afford it, including the King and Queen, gives one splendid and sumptuous ball, at which you are sure to meet everybody that is anybody; and ten or twelve *grandes dames de par le monde* throw open their salons once a week (Sunday is the favourite "receiving night" for these leaders of fashion) to all that is distinguished and illustrious by birth or official station, native or foreign, in the capital. At these pleasant reunions an impromptu dance not unfrequently concludes the evening; but interminable and never-flagging *causeries*, lively or sentimental, constitute the chief feature of Roumanian social gatherings, at which fragrant cigarettes and exquisite tea are *de rigueur*, whilst card-playing, except amongst the elder foreign diplomatists and a few

of the more old-fashioned territorial magnates, finds but little favour. There is plenty of picquet, *préférence*, and cayenne-whist to be had at the club, the points being as a rule far less extravagant than they are at the "Bébé" in Paris, or at one or two exceptionally exclusive clubs in Pall Mall. Baccarat is not altogether unknown to the members of the "Jockey," a club on the Podoi Mogosoi founded by Creppy Vivian, where anybody, moreover, who yearns for a five-louis écarté-pool can obtain his heart's desire without difficulty. But really high play, damaging to fortune and honour, such as I have witnessed in well-nigh every other European capital, is of extremely rare occurrence in Bucharest; and, although I have lived for months at a stretch in the very thick of the "playing set," whose afternoons and nights are chiefly spent at the card-table, I do not remember to have ever seen five hundred pounds won or lost by any individual player at a single sitting. The science of betting is still a mystery to Roumanian sportsmen, and billiards involve too much trouble to be taken earnestly in hand by the languid lions of Bucharest.

That the outdoor amusements of the Roumanian capital consist almost exclusively of driving and riding—the latter exercise, moreover, only finding favour with the sterner sex—on the Chaussée, a long and dusty extramural road leading from the extreme end of the Podoi Mogosoi to nowhere in particular, is attributable to the congenital indolence of Dacian men and to the circumstance that the vast majority of well-born Roumanian women suffer from constitutional anæmia. The *jeunesse dorée* of Bucharest society experiences no ambi-

tion whatsoever to excel in athletic sports, or, indeed, in any physical accomplishment involving either personal trouble or muscular exertion. Cricket and croquet are alike unknown to these good-looking, dapper youths, ninety per cent. of whom, to speak within reasonable bounds, have never seen a tennis-court, a racing-boat, or a game of football, or taken a fair heel-and-toe ten-mile walk in the whole course of their lives. They can ride gracefully enough, are tolerable fencers, and amazingly good marksmen with the pistol, these latter acquirements being indispensable to men of anything like social standing in a country where politics and flirtations run equally high, and differences arising from either are, in ten cases out of twelve, settled by the arbitrament of the duello. But the curled darlings of Bucharest *salons*, although good horsemen, whips, and swordsmen, are certainly not athletes from the English, or even the German, point of view. They lack that joy in the mere consciousness of possessing well-trained muscular force that stimulates English lads of the upper classes to court fatigue, exposure, and positive privation; and they are entirely deficient in the rationalistic turn of mind which prompts the youth of Germany to acquire proficiency in all gymnastic exercises, on the common-sense ground that life is but a struggle of the unit against the plurality, in which chronic combat the strongest wins and the weakest goes to the wall; and that strength of body, as well as of intellect, being obviously an element of success in conflict, should therefore be cultivated even unto its maximum of possible development. Neither British instincts nor Teutonic

reasonings, in so far as they have bearing upon the delights or utilities of severe physical exertion, find any echo in the happy-go-lucky, eminently amiable and languidly careless disposition of the young Roumanian *lion à tous crins*. He finds a more congenial outlet for whatever latent energy, enterprise, and perseverance may leaven the inborn indolence of his character, in flirtation than in fives, in small-talk than in steeple-chasing, in piquet than in polo. As a rule, he is a Past-Master in love-making ere he has attained an age at which English and German hobbledehoys have not yet served their apprenticeship to that dangerous craft. But, long after he has carried the tale of his conquests over from the little finger of his left hand to the thumb of his right, has contributed to a divorce or two and fought his first duel, any average Eton boy of the upper-fifth could "lick his head off" at running, jumping, or swimming, whilst the "sappiest" *primaner* at a Berlin gymnasium could give him an unknown number of points at swarming up the hanging rope or vaulting the double-bar. It is the absoluteness of his disabilities in these respects that limits his open-air recreations—at least, during his residence in the capital, throughout its winter and spring seasons—to driving, riding, and sauntering on the Chaussée, a home-preserve of Dan Cupid, where Strephon can count upon finding Chloe any fine afternoon; and Phyllis, well aware that nothing short of a cataclysm can prevent Damon, attired in the latest Parisian fashion, from meeting her at the Rondeau or in the avenue of beeches that serves as a lounge for the *crême de la crême* of Bucharest society during the delightful hour

immediately preceding sunset, reclines in her landau with half-shut eyes, apparently heedless of all surrounding objects, as she is swiftly driven up and down the long promenade, until the intently-watched-for appearance of her favourite admirer for the time being elicits a flash of black lightning from those seemingly sleepy orbs. A few seconds later her caftaned, velvet-capped coachman will be observed to rein in his horses and draw up to the roadside, or haply to turn their heads in an opposite direction to that in which he was assiduously urging them along when a soft hiss, followed by a brief command, issuing *sotto voce* from his "mitica Doamna's" lips, apprised him that the "Pirutschade" portion of his postmeridional duties—that is to say, the function of displaying to the greatest advantage his mistress, her toilette, carriage, and *attelage*, as well as his own skill in driving—had come to an end; and that for the next hour or two he might confidently consider himself "in waiting."

The Chaussée is so leading a feature in Bucharest fashionable life—and what other life is there in the Roumanian capital worth speaking of?—that it deserves some slight attempt at description. Being, in fact, a national highway or turnpike road, as its name denotes, its length is more or less an unknown quantity. I know that it begins at the octroi barrier, just about the spot where the *enceinte* of Bucharest would commence to the westward, were that most straggling of cities a fortified place; and I opine that it terminates somewhere in the Carpathians, on the Transylvanian frontier, where its Roumanian end probably offers a painful contrast to

the smooth and solid Austrian posting-road into which it becomes merged. It is only fashionable—and therefore tolerably macadamised—for a couple of miles or so from its starting-point; but, throughout about a third of that distance, it is flanked on either side at short intervals by pretty villas and gardens, used as summer-residences by the wealthy Boyars, financiers, and politicians to whom they belong. In one of these suburban retreats, the *dulce domum* of that eminent statesman and art connoisseur, Kogalniceanu, I witnessed, during the early summer of 1877, a strange political *rencontre* between the venerable Prince Gortchakoff, the living impersonation of absolutist governmental principles and old-world diplomacy, and Costaki Rosetti, a democrat of democrats, at that time the guiding spirit of the Bratiano Cabinet, although not himself a Cabinet Minister, but holding irresponsible office as Speaker of the Roumanian House of Commons, and exercising extraordinary influence upon public opinion by his writings in the *Romanul*, of which he was at once proprietor and editor. More or less directly concerned in every revolutionary movement or political conspiracy that has agitated the Latin races of Europe during the last forty years, and affiliated to all the secret societies having for their object the subversion of monarchical institutions throughout the universe, Costaki Rosetti was probably the last man alive with whom Alexander Gortchakoff would have desired to spend an evening, could he possibly have avoided so doing; nor could anyone acquainted with the lives and characters of these two remarkable personages believe for a moment that the Arch-Republican *par excellence* of Eastern

Europe was likely to derive much real gratification from sitting on a sofa side by side with the most uncompromising advocate and instrument of despotism that ever, not being a Czar, ruled the Russian roost. Thus the few guests admitted by the Foreign Minister's especial favour to witness that most incongruous meeting, and who were gathered round the divan upon which the vivacious Russian Chancellor had snugly installed himself after casting a glance at some of Kogalniceanu's art treasures, awaited the arrival of the distinguished Roumanian Democrat with some anxiety as well as curiosity; nor was our illustrious host, though justly renowned for his coolness in critical situations, as perfectly at his ease as I have seen him when parliamentary storms were raging over his head, or when, in his temporary lodging at Berlin, he was awaiting the Congress's decisions, in July, 1878, upon which the destinies of his native country were altogether dependent. However, the Dogmatist of Despotism (although manifestly in liquor) and the Apostle of Freedom got on together much better than could reasonably have been expected, considering their hearty mutual detestation of each other's political principles. Although they exchanged more than one sharp word-thrust in the course of their conversational encounter, which lasted about a quarter of an hour, they contrived to maintain a sufficient cordiality of demeanour to "save the situation" and effectually relieve their host, as well as the other Roumanian statesmen present at this historical interview, from the disquietudes suggested to them by the diametrical divergence of these two gifted men's opinions—not to mention another

alarming factor in the social problem offered to our consideration, namely, Prince Gortchakoff's fiery temper, but ill calculated to brook restraint, and only too liable to break bounds upon much lighter provocation than it was deemed likely to suffer from Rosetti's rough humour and irrepressible bluntness of manner. All went off quietly enough, however; and those who had felt as if they were standing on the brink of a volcano whilst Alexander Michailovich was peering restlessly through his spectacles at the Mazzini of Roumania (whose life would not have been worth five minutes' purchase, could the Russian Chancellor have had his will of it, any time during the twenty years previous to their meeting) drew a long breath of unmixed satisfaction when the party broke up naturally, instead of being violently shattered to fragments by some untimely explosion of outraged absolutism or infuriate democracy.

But Chaussée associations have caused me to stray in the most unjustifiable manner from the promenade itself. Some little distance beyond its inhabited region, and about half way to the Rond Point, fashion and beauty's Ultima Thule, stands a dainty little kiosque in the centre of a semicircular clearing set out with tiny tables and chairs. It is "the thing" to alight from carriage or horseback during the daily rounds in the Chaussée, and to take some slight refreshment at this miniature *al fresco* café—an ice or slice of watermelon in the warm spring afternoons, a draught of hot spiced wine or a dram of curaçoa when the snow lies from three to four feet deep on the metalled surface of the roadway, and sledging, under conditions of aggravated flirtation, has grown

fast and furious. At the Rond Point itself broad tracks, which it were vile flattery to qualify as roads, strike off to the left and right, leading to cosy retreats well known to the *lions* and *lionnes* of Bucharest society, and to supper-gardens enlivened after a certain hour of the night by the quaint and charming performances of the *laotari*, or native minstrels, with whose musical achievements and professional peculiarities I have already dealt in a preceding chapter. It is a favourite amusement of the more emancipate young Boyars and Boyarins to drive out to one or other of these *gradine* between ten P.M. and midnight, after the theatre, and partake of "champagne and a chicken at last" in a vine-clad arbour—or, if the weather be chilly, in a snug little wooden châlet—whilst swarthy songsters chant wild national legends of robbers, sprites, and giants, or interpret, with most musical voices and admirable expression, Basil Alecsandri's tender and passionate lays. Chiefly favoured in these nocturnal excursions by patricians of both sexes is the Gradina Herestreu, a vast and swampy but well-wooded wilderness greatly beloved by Roumanian frogs, there gathered together in unnumbered millions, and vocal, during the hours of darkness, to an extent that triumphantly defies all competition on the part of the *laotari*. Anybody who is curious to ascertain what batrachian capacities in the way of massive chorus-croaking can achieve, when countless frogs are settled down comfortably in a locality perfectly suited to their convenience and requirements and especially favourable to the development of their peculiar serenading proclivities, should spend a moonshiny clear

night in the Garden of the Saw—the grinding of which useful but somewhat strident implement, by the way, produces sounds extraordinarily similar to those emitted by the amphibious aborigines of that moist but musical resort.

When a British squire of the Conservative variety, much exercised by the levelling tendencies of the age we live in, makes regretful allusion to the "good old days," or a French Legitimist noble, writhing under the Republican yoke, mournfully refers to "le bon vieux temps," those would-be reactionaries may generally be understood to refer to historical periods from which the present generation is separated by from one century to three hundred years or so. According to *laudatores temporis acti* of the classes alluded to, no epoch in English or French annals that was at least not considerably antecedent to the discovery of steam-power and the extinction of the professional highwayman in these islands, or to the invention of the guillotine and the abolition of the droit du seigneur in fair France, would be entitled to claim the least respect or consideration as a "genuine good old time." Similarly a Prussian Kraut-Junker would assuredly date back "die guten alten Zeiten" to the reign of Frederic the Great, at latest; whilst an Austrian Tory or Magyar Federalist, if called upon to define his ideal of the "good old days," could scarcely fail to relegate them to the period when Maria Theresa, Empress-King of immortal memory, ruled her peoples on either side the Leitha with a rod of iron.

Roumania has been, until very lately, so inveterate a

laggard in that international race of which the prizes are independence, civil liberty, and self-government, that her "good old days"—or at least what would be considered as such from the purely Boyar point of view—are much less remote from the present time than those of any other Christian country in Central or Western Europe. As a matter of fact, but a quarter of a century intervenes between the Roumania of to-day, free, constitutional and parliamentary, linked to her neighbours by railway and telegraphic lines, her chief cities paved with wood or asphalte and lighted by gas, her brigandage extirpated and her internal traffic locomotion carried on upon good solid roads, and the "Danubian Principalities" occupied by Austrian troops during the Crimean war—a sort of Debateable Land, the favourite battle-ground of surrounding nations throughout many a woeful century. Moldavia and Wallachia, within the remembrance of middle-aged men, were distinct provinces, each ruled by a Hospodar of its own, selected by the Porte from among the great Dacian or Phanariote Boyars native to the soil. These Hospodars were Turkish vassals; the principalities themselves constituted an integral portion of the Ottoman Empire. A Moldavian soldier of fortune, John Alexander Cusa, first brought about their amalgamation into one State by persuading the notables of either province to forward his name to Stamboul for appointment to the office of their common Hospodar, and by judiciously bribing the then Sultan's advisers to ratify his simultaneous election at Jassy and Bucharest—the result of local discontents, finding their expression in rioting and disorder, to which it is not

necessary to do more than allude in this place. But Cusa, though a man of unquestionable ability and patriotism, was unable either to free his country from its vassaldom to Turkey or to civilise the people submitted to his sway. When I first visited Bucharest and made his acquaintance twenty-two years ago, the feudal system, comprising absolute serfdom, and the Boyar's power of life and death over the tiller of the soil, had but recently been abolished. In the whole of the United Principalities there was not a metalled highway fifty miles in length, nor a single yard of railroad. Torture, though illegal, was still practised by barbarous officials in the provinces; a revolting case came under my personal cognisance at Ploesti only a few weeks before Cusa's abdication was extorted from him by a band of conspirators chiefly composed of men whom he had raised from nothing to positions of high trust and responsibility. The Roumanian "good old days" came to an end with his fall; that is to say, the days that were bad, wicked, and cruel for the miserably oppressed Roumanian people, but "good" only to two privileged classes —the Moldo-Wallachian Boyars and priests—and to one guild or craft, practised by a strange, wild folk, not, strictly speaking, of Roumanian nationality, but enjoying, far beyond all men of pure Dacian blood, the favour alike of prince and peasant. The inauguration of the new era which dawned upon Roumania when Charles of Hohenzollern took up his election as Hospodar upon a constitutional platform, was a heavy blow indeed to the laotari, or minstrels.

Bucharest is a city of the strangest contrasts. In its

streets Occident and Orient, civilisation and barbarism, the nineteenth and the tenth centuries, jostle one another incessantly, and in the most picturesque manner. The natty little French-polished Boyar, who looks just as if he had been freshly transported thither from the Boulevarts in a Chaussée d'Antin bandbox; the dark chestnut Rouman peasant, whose costume and language have undergone not the least change for eighteen hundred years, who is as ignorant of all "the thoughts that shake mankind" as the meek grey bullocks that are part of his family and "compose," from an artistic point of view, so admirably with him; the all but black, all but naked, wild-eyed, white-toothed, inconceivably dirty and supremely graceful Tsigan, who is still shrewdly suspected of idolatry, plays all sorts of instruments by instinct, is the most dexterous of living "annexers," and can turn his hand to more crafts than any other living man; the lumpish, puffy, yellow-skinned Lipovan, in caftan and red cap, like a fluted chimney-cowl, high-voiced and well-nigh hairless, the voluntary victim of a devilish superstition, whose talent for driving the most fierce horses under the most intricate conditions is, like poetising, a heaven-born quality, *nascitur non fit;* the bearded, gaberdined Jew with his deep-set eyes, glancing keenly yet anxiously round him; the absolutely nude little children of both sexes, *couleur de* roasted coffee-berry; the gipsy girls, wearing a solitary thin petticoat, and a cotton shift open from the throat to below the waist; the swarthy Rouman soldiers, in quaint but serviceable uniforms of colours never before seen in any European army—colours that somehow or other impress you

as having been borrowed from the druggist's shop; dark eyed, waxen-complexioned ladies, exquisitely dressed and manifestly intent upon doing the greatest possible amount of damage to their natural enemies; yellow-haired, snub-nosed Russian istvostchiks; portly, spectacled Germans; tall, stalwart, sulky Serbs with drooping moustache and heavy jowl—these various and contradictory types may be encountered during half an hour's stroll in the Podoi Mogoschoi, Bucharest's Regent Street, Pall Mall, and Cornhill, all in one. This Podoi Mogoshoi is, with the exception of a new boulevart—the trees of which will give a pleasant shade some fifty years or so hence, if they get over their present sickness—the only paved street in Bucharest—that is, paved according to the English or French application of stereotomic principles. Turn but the least bit out of it, into any of the highly fashionable streets, where Boyards of præ-Adamitic lineage live in a straggling, hand-to-mouth, reckless sort of way, and you will shortly find yourself in a wholly different region. To those who are unacquainted with the bodily sensations to be experienced during a steeplechase in a victoria I recommend with the greatest confidence a drive through the side streets of Bucharest. There are plenty of water-jumps. Some friends of mine, whom I frequently used to visit, lived in the Strada Belvedere, wherein was situated a deep and gloomy pond which my horses invariably attempted to take in their stride, with a want of success that I still deplore. There was a nice little brook, with a goodish take-off, in the Strada Stirbey Voda, and some stiffish things in the way of double jumps in the Strada Herestreu, inhabited

by any number of seigneurs—the Bucharest Grosvenor Gardens. You can break your neck, disjoint your spine, and loosen your internal economy in general with ludicrous ease in the Roumanian capital. All you have to do is to leap into a *birja*—a rough sort of victoria, drawn by two space-devouring horses, and driven by a child of nature—shout "Heidé!" and administer a humorous poke in the middle of the back to your driver. Parenthetically, I may remark that to go out driving in Bucharest without a stick would be like putting to sea in a ship unprovided with a rudder. None of the *birjas* know the names of any house or street—and all of them regard numbers as a contemptible modern invention, quite beneath their notice. You must steer your cabman with your stick. Do you wish him to go to the right, you tap him on the right shoulder or hip, observing the same procedure, *mutatis mutandis*, when you want him to go to the left; "Heidé!" and a dig in the small of the back will start him at a hand gallop; "Prrrrrr!" indefinitely prolonged, will pull him up with a suddenness that brings your knees and chin together, and gives you a metallic taste in the mouth. Having started your *birja*, let him have his head for half a dozen streets or so, with what sporting Frenchmen would call their "obstacles," and if you do not feel as though you had just had a bad railway accident, your microcosm must be composed of steel and india-rubber, instead of the usual materials. I can fancy that tossing in a blanket must produce the kind of physical uneasiness consequent upon calling on your friends in Bucharest. The natives are hardened—they pass half their time between earth and

sky, in *birjas;* but even they cannot stand the punishment of driving slowly. The terrifying velocity with which one is transported from Calea to Strada and Piazza to Chaussée in that strange city is chiefly attributable to the nature of its surface accidents. At top speed you fly over many minor obstructions, each one of which would loosen your teeth if you surmounted it with deliberation. How the springs stand it all I cannot imagine. Although everybody, prince and peasant, boyar and *birja*, drives as hard as his horses—mostly small spirited beasts from Bukovina and the Ukraine—can lay leg to ground, there is hardly ever an accident; but, *en revanche*, the bad language that is used on all hands may hopefully defy European competition.

I need scarcely, perhaps, state that Bucharest is not drained upon sanitary principles. Its sewage is, with a gallant disregard of consequences that is somewhat apt to astonish an Englishman, carefully conveyed into the Dumbovitsa, a small yellow river that runs through the city. Now, the Dumbovitsa supplies the inhabitants of Bucharest with water; and it is a pleasing, suggestive sight to contemplate the delivery, by the largest sewer in the town, of its contents into this river within a few yards of the main pipe of the waterworks, that takes up the limpid element and forwards it, without any of your luxurious filtering, into the houses of the citizens. A no less refreshing spectacle is that afforded at all hours of the day by numerous full-grown men, who are bathing between the great sewer and the waterworks' main sucker. There is no petty affectation of decency about these fine fellows. Nevertheless the people of this

country are getting quite particular about all sorts of trifles that formerly they paid no attention to. They decidedly wear more clothes—that is to say more of them wear clothes—than they did when I first became acquainted with the United Principalities. Boys and girls of ten and eleven used to run about *in puris naturalibus*—Roumania being *then* as now, a Christian country, ambitious of independence and European *status*—looking like animated bronzes and perfectly unaware that they were not dressed in the height of the fashion. They have something on now—not much, indeed, but an appreciable garment—at least, in Bucharest. I fancy that the former modes still prevail in the provinces. Most of the children and adolescents are yellow with fever, which, as may well be imagined, rages in Bucharest at all times, but is quite rampant and uncontrollable in the summer. How the poor live, whilst they do live, is a mystery. Bucharest is not a manufacturing or industrial town; it only manufactures one article—tobacco, the cultivation and sale of which is a Government monopoly. Meat is far too dear to be got at by the lower classes; vegetarianism is the rule, flesh-eating the exception, amongst Roumanian *prolétaires;* and they certainly don't look as if a vegetable diet agreed with them. They are absurdly, desperately, horribly poor, partly because they are lazy, partly because they have not stamina enough to work really hard.

Nothing is more unlike to anything else—say milk to ink or pellucid amber to opaque coal—than is a Roumanian to an English Christmas Day. Almost the only characteristic common to them both is that of a religious

anniversary; and even in this respect they are not perfectly identical, for the Dacian "Sêrbâtóre Craciunului" comes off twelve days later than the British Feast of the Nativity. Excessive eating and drinking find no place in the Roumanian ritual of Christmas celebrations. The descendants of Trajan's legionaries are not a dinner-giving, I had almost written, dinner-eating people. Abstemiousness is one of the leading features in their national character. They reck not lusty meats, and however oppressive their sorrows may be, seldom seek to drown them in the bowl. Broadly speaking, there are but two social classes in Roumania—the Boyars, or landed proprietors, in which category are comprised all the offshoots of what we, in England, should call county families, including many thousands of officers, Government employés, lawyers, and graceful but unoccupied prowlers, who never have owned, or will own, a rood of their native soil—unless through an advantageous matrimonial alliance—but nevertheless count as Boyars because, at some time or other, somebody from whom they claim direct or collateral descent, was a proprietor of Dacian dirt, and, as a matter of course until within the last twenty years, of Dacian men, women, and children to boot. The other class is that of the peasants, *mamaliga consumere nati*, who were serfs not so very long ago, and owe their emancipation to no strivings after liberty of their own, but to the rough and ready philanthropy of the much maligned Jón Alecsandrû Cusa, who freed them from slavery one afternoon with a bold stroke of his pen. The Roumanian who is not a Boyar is a *terranu*, or peasant, and *vice versâ; exceptis excipiendis*, of

course. Both classes are addicted to fasting, to an extent altogether incompatible with Christmas conviviality, or indeed with heavy feasting at any special season. The peasants fast all the year round for the best of all possible reasons—because they cannot help it. A good many of the so-called Boyars are restrained from habitual over-indulgence in the pleasures of the table by an exiguity of pecuniary resource scarcely less chronic than that which prevents the *terranu* from damaging his digestion or spoiling his figure by frequent surfeits. The rich Boyars are, as a rule, conspicuously religious, at least in their own country; and, as the Greek Orthodox variety of Christianity, which Dacians one and all profess, makes quite a speciality amongst creeds of pinching the stomachs of its votaries, pious Boyars think nothing of fasting for four-and-twenty hours at a stretch, three times a week, or of total abstinence from animal substance during the long protracted "Ajuni" prescribed by the ordinances of their Church. On eggs, fruit, and certain cunning preparations of maize-flour, more or less artistic outgrowths of the dismal *mamaliga* mess that forms the staple of the peasant's diet, an exemplary Boyar will live in a wiry sort of way, not uncheerfully or with manifest repining, from one month's end to another; and, when he does at intervals break out into meat, exhibits a moderation in the consumption of that comestible which may perhaps be most reasonably accounted for by the extraordinary contrast between price and quality characterising Roumanian beef, the former being as phenomenally high as the latter is abnormally low.

Any Englishman who, finding it incumbent upon him to spend Christmas Day on Roumanian soil, should yearn for the "splendid sirloin" gastronomically associated in his mind with the British celebration of that anniversary, would, in all probability, after expending much energy in efforts as vain as strenuous and costly, to realise his longings, have to submit to grievous disappointment. There is nothing to be said against the moral character of the Roumanian bullock. A more industrious, patient, sober, and conscientious animal does not live. It exhibits no reprehensible proclivities towards riotous living, spendthriftry, or idleness. Its temper is as subdued as its hue, a dull, uniform grey. No one can with justice accuse Roumanian bullocks of "letting their angry passions rise," nor have they, within the memory of man, been seen by any credible person to "scratch and tear each other's eyes." They are beasts of the highest respectability, whom to know, when living, is to esteem. Dead, they are less lovable—that is to say, considered from the comestible point of view. Converted into beef, the Roumanian bullock is a failure, at once mortifying and maleficent. It were unjust, nay, heartless, to blame the worthy ruminant for his shortcomings in this respect. Not he, but the treatment accorded to him during life, must be held accountable for the extraordinary toughness, dryness, and lack of specific flavour by which his flesh may be readily distinguished from that of the tender, succulent, and toothsome British ox. The Roumanian method of preparing live bullocks for transformation into beef by the lethal process consists chiefly in making them work with a minimum of inter-

mission at traction of one sort or another for ten or twelve years, and in giving them as little to eat, during that period, as will just qualify them for plodding along, hour after hour, year in year out, in front of ploughs, carts, and huge tilted waggons. When a Dacian steer has led this exhilarating life for a decade or so, in the course of which all of him that was flesh in the days of his calfhood has been duly converted into sinew bearing a close resemblance to the slips of indiarubber manufactured for the use of drawing-schools, his owner, recognising in his bearing and demeanour sure symptoms of failing strength and incipient infirmity, reluctantly resolves to part with him to the nearest butcher, by whom he is dealt with *secundum artem*. It is beef produced in this manner that will be served up to the Englishman sojourning in Roumania at Christmastide, or any other tide, if he venture to order a fine sirloin of "carne de bouu" for his dinner. He will therefore do well to eliminate that particular essential of Christmas cheer from his *ménu* on the 25th of December or 6th of January, the Western and Eastern anniversaries of the Nativity, either of which he may celebrate with a clear conscience, there being about as much to be said for the historical authenticity of one date as of the other. The true-born Briton lives not who, having exercised his jaws upon a Dacian sirloin, could sing with any degree of heartiness or jollity, "Oh! the roast beef of Roumania, and oh! the Roumanian roast beef!" To the tune of a penitential psalm, though, and with tears in his eyes, perhaps he might manage to moan out that melancholy refrain, fraught with agonising significance. Beef, on

the left bank of the Lower Danube, is the converse of a viand.

Not so the Roumanian turkey. Fed without stint upon the tawny maize for which its native land is justly celebrated, this steadfast and continuously assimilative bird not infrequently attains a grateful fatness and imposing weight that would qualify it for honourable mention in the annals of Leadènhall Market. Confidently may the *curcanu* be summoned to the Christmas board. He is a meritorious biped, of which Roumania is so proud that she has set his plumes in the caps of her valiant militiamen, and "Penesh Curcanul" (Turkey-Feather) has been created a popular hero by the magical pen of Vasilie Alecsandri, the Roumanian Laureate. Of a verity, the grey turkey-plumes were well to the front on the dreadful day of Grivitsa, when the Moldavian *dorobantsi* bore themselves so manfully in their first fight. In either quality, as food or a war-emblem, the Roumanian turkey has proved himself, again and again, more than equal to all reasonable expectations. Stuffed with chestnuts, he defies indigestion and all its works; waving o'er a warrior's brow, his pinion points the way to victory or death.

With respect to other accustomed accessories of the British Christmas board, they are almost as conspicuous by their absence from Roumanian dinner-tables at the festive season, as roast beef and plum-pudding themselves. The nearest thing to mince-pie in the "scumpa tseara si frumoasa" is stuffed egg-plant. By "making believe a good deal," as Dick Swiveller's Marchioness did with her orange-peel and water, an Anglo-Saxon,

gifted with strong will and a lively imagination, may perhaps succeed in persuading himself that *vinu caldu*, or wine heated to scalding point, with cinnamon and nutmeg, is a sort of wassail. Mulled Odobesti, however, is one of the few Roumanian institutions to which foreigners hybernating in the Principality take most kindly. But it is by no means considered peculiarly appropriate to Christmastide. All through the terrible four months' winter that annually afflicts Roumania, *vinu caldu* is persistently absorbed by the native Boyar and distinguished alien, in the vain hope of keeping out the cold. To the same end the peasant swallows as many farthing drams of *rachiù*, a peculiarly fiery and nauseous spirit, distilled from rye, potatoes, old boots, and worn-out fur caps—in fact, from pretty nearly any substance that will boil—as he can purchase, beg, or get credit for at the *crisma*. Six pennyworth of this potent liquor would intoxicate a rhinoceros, but an average *terranu* will drink a shilling's-worth with alacrity if he can get it for nothing. Such a dose, of course, makes him dead drunk; but that is just what he considers to be a blissful state.

Leaving the religious ceremonials incident to the celebration of the Nativity Feast out of the question, as they are absolutely identical with those practised in Russia, Servia, and Bulgaria, and exhibit no local peculiarity whatsoever, the two chief characteristics of a Roumanian Christmas are the intense cold of the weather and the magnificent scale upon which sledging is carried on in town and country by the upper or Boyar class. Those who live their lives in these brumous but temperate isles can form no notion, based upon sentient experience,

of the severity of a Roumanian winter. Towards the end of the year, and during the whole month of January in particular, the cold becomes almost intolerable, and the snow, even in the vast open plains of Greater Wallachia, accumulates steadily, as fall succeeds fall, until it covers the whole face of the earth with a dazzling white crust several feet in thickness. As a rule, all wheeled locomotion, save on the railways, ceases early in December, and the transactions of business or pleasure, involving conveyance from one spot to another, are dependent exclusive upon sledges for their fulfilment. It is about Christmastide that the Chaussée of Bucharest, a long straight drive outside the city, presents an extraordinarily lively and attractive aspect throughout any bright clear afternoon, no matter how profound may be the prostration of the mercury in the thermometer-tube. Hundreds of gracefully designed and picturesquely equipped sleighs are being driven at little short of racing speed up and down the road, paved for the nonce with a smooth superficies of hardened snow, over which the trackers glide, and the horses' hoofs trample noiselessly. There is no lack of gay sound, however, upon the Chaussée. That element of vivacity is supplied by countless tinkling sledge-bells, and by the high-pitched shouts with which the Birjai and Lipovani urge on their fiery little steeds to the top of their pace. Many of the sledges are quaint and beautiful objects, shaped like swans, couchant lions, shells, boats, and flowers. For the most part their occupants are dark-eyed Roumanian dames and damsels, enveloped to their dimpled chins in costly furs, and manifestly exhilarated by the swiftness

of motion and sharpness of the cold. Their joyous laughter rings out clearly through the thin pure air, and blends harmoniously with the "tintinnabulation of the bells, bells, bells." On the whole, the cheeriest of Roumanian Christmas celebrations is, perhaps, a sleigh-race on the Chaussée, terminating in a deep draught of *vinu caldu* at the pavilion near the Rond Point.

CHAPTER VII.

LIFE IN BELGRADE.

I HAD scarcely written down the above heading when the thought flashed across my mind that an apter and more veracious title for a chapter dealing with the more salient social characteristics of the Servian capital would be "Existence in Belgrade;" for of "Life," in the conventional acceptation of that substantive (when headed by a capital L) commonly understood to comprehend hospitality, amusements, acquaintance with the arts, science, and literature, I have never yet been fortunate enough to diagnose any symptoms to speak of in that dismallest of deadly-dull cities. However, although my vists to Belgrade during the last quarter of a century have been frequent and of long duration, it is just possible that the outward and visible signs of its social and intellectual vitality may have escaped my notice, and that it may be quite a rollicking place, teeming with recreations, infinitely various and extraordinarily entertaining. In consideration, therefore, of these potentialities, the existence of which I doubt, but do not venture to deny, I will leave my heading as it stands, respectfully soliciting my readers to accept it *cum grano salis*.

Belgrade, only nineteen years ago an Ottoman stronghold owning the dual sway of a Turkish Pasha, the governor of the fortress and its garrison, and of a Christian Hospodar, vassal and tributary to the Padishah, is now the capital of a free and independent kingdom, blessed with parliamentary institutions, constitutional government, hereditary monarchy, a standing army, a national debt, and many other brilliant attributes of modern civilisation. It is lacking in some of the practical benefits which, according to the doctrine of the "fitness of things," ought to be the concrete and logical consequences of boundless liberty and unfettered self-rule; but, as far as mere theory is concerned, it is in every respect equal to Paris, London, or Vienna. With respect to such petty details, accessorial to health and comfort, as paving, lighting, drainage, and water-supply, it is about a century behind any average German provincial town of reactionary tendencies—say Stargard or Nassau, venerable burghs which the most ardently patriotic Teuton would scarcely choose to put forward as shining illustrations of urban progress. But in the matter of political emancipation it is indeed a favoured city; whilst the civil rights of its inhabitants are so extensive that it would be difficult to say where they begin or end. It may be alleged with perfect truthfulness that Belgrade and its native population are admirably suited to one another. For all that—or perhaps because of this complete mutual suitability—Belgrade is a semi-barbarous town, or rather, overgrown village, as ugly as it is inconvenient, surpassingly dirty, sordid, uncomfortable, and ill-administered. As an exhaustive exem-

plification of administrative incompetence, ignorance, and inertia, of municipal shortsightedness and stupidity, of utter absence of governmental initiative or individual enterprise, it is probably unrivalled amongst European capitals. A tame hog couchant, plentifully bemired, should be its crest, were it endowed with so respectable an attribute; nor could a fitter motto be allotted to it than the Servian equivalent of the famous Circumlocution Office device—"How Not to Do It." Considered as a place of residence, its disabilities are overwhelming, its undesirability without parallel. If this verdict be objected to as extravagantly severe by any foreigner of respectable antecedents, be he diplomatist, engineer, or merchant, whom adverse destiny has compelled to sojourn for any length of time in the Servian capital, I will eat the present reigning King, Milan Obrenovich IV., jack-boots—though he wears them uncommonly high and roomy—epaulets, Grand Cross of the Takova and all, or perish miserably in the attempt!

Belgrade is a curiously straggling, up-and-down city, built upon a huge blunt rocky promontory that juts out into a waste of waters, just where Danube and Save are confluent. Two sides of the shelving bluffs covered by its steep, tortuous streets are, therefore, skirted by deep and swiftly flowing rivers, which, at certain seasons of the year, frequently overflow their banks and submerge the plains on the Hungarian shores of which they constitute the natural frontiers. During these inundations Belgrade, contemplated from the deck of a Save or Danube steamer, or from some rare vantage-point of dry land on the neighbouring territories of the so-called Servian

and Croatian Banats, presents the aspect of an island city. The outlines of the broad-backed cliff crowned by its forts, churches, and ruined minarets, and flanked on either face by its whitewashed, flat-roofed houses, are extremely bold and striking. A more picturesque site, indeed, could scarcely have been selected for a semi-oriental capital, one of Christendom's outlying bulwarks, destined by nature to become a great commercial emporium, the terminus of a vast network of railways, and an important centre of rapidly developing civilisation. To an intelligent people, susceptible of æsthetic culture, and gifted even with those rudimentary instincts which, under careful training, seldom fail to engender good taste in their possessors, this admirable site could not fail to suggest countless opportunities for adding to its native attractions by the aid of graceful or stately domestic architecture, terrace-gardening, and massive public works judiciously erected upon salient points of the rugged promontory's crest and sides. When the Turks held Belgrade, the slender and elegant shafts of their numerous minarets and the glittering domes of their mosques supplied decorative features in plenty to the general aspect of the city. But since the Serbs have had their own way with their capital, emancipate from the control of Turkish canons of architectural taste, the mosques have all been levelled with the ground and the minarets have shared their fate—all but two, one of which, in the centre of the upper town, is a fast crumbling ruin, whilst the other, situate on the parade-ground of the citadel, fronting the Konak, is kept in tolerable repair by reason of its utility as a military look-out, commanding views

of both river-courses and of Hungarian territory for many a mile to the northward, eastward, and westward.

The extraordinary and painfully discomfiting surface irregularities of Belgrade are, of course, attributable to peculiarities of its topographical situation. It covers both slopes of a steep and rugged hill, a circumstance which condemns its inhabitants and the strangers within its gates, when taking their walks abroad, to pass the chief part of their time in climbing up one precipitous street as soon as they have got to the bottom of another of precisely the same description. Indeed, there is but one thoroughfare, worthy of the name, in the whole city, that is tolerably level—the Terazia, a broad highway about a quarter of a mile in length, conveying the impression to the foreigner who beholds it for the first time, that it would have liked to be a boulevard, but had been obliged to give up that aspiration through intrinsic and incurable stoniness. I may mention parenthetically that the Prince's Konak, or Palace, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and several of the largest private houses in Belgrade, are situate upon the Terazia, which owes its comparative superficial levelness to the fact that it happens to run along the narrow plateau forming the summit of the huge rock, one base of which is washed by the waters of Danube and the other by those of Save. All the streets, including the fashionable Terazia, are paved—the word is utterly inappropriate to the process applied to their surface, but I am at a loss for any other less inaccurately descriptive of its treatment—in a manner eminently calculated to point to the inference that the Servian Board of Works, or at least the Belgrade

Municipal Paving Committee, must be exclusively composed of wily bootmakers and cunning chiropodists.

It is more than probable, judging by the gloom of the expression prevalent amongst the forbidding physiognomies of the native Belgradians, that this sort of paving system is productive of a settled melancholy in the populations afflicted by it, and tends, moreover, to indurate the character. Paraphrasing Shakespeare, it may be said that "the man who hath no comfort in his sole is fit for treason, stratagem, and spoil;" and it is but common charity to ascribe the truculent scowl that is the leading facial characteristic of the "sons of the soil" (more correctly "of the pavement") to the demoralising effect upon their characters of the chronic agonies suffered by their "poor feet." The Belgrade pavement is supremely favourable to the rapid growth of corns; but these callosities are seldom coincident with amiability of temper in those condemned to wear them. Nor are sprained ankles, another profuse outcome of the Servian *trottoirs*, especially conducive to benevolence of feeling. Consequently, as every living soul in the Czillak capital is more or less a martyr to corns or dislocations, or both, owing to the maleficent pavement, Belgradian faces are apt to impress the observant foreigner with a sense of insecurity, as far as his personal property is concerned, which serves to distract his attention from the poignant anguish endured by his own toes and ankles as he stumbles along the Belgrade streets. The Belgradians may be kindly, cheerful, and honest people. All I can say, from personal observation, is that they do not look

it; as how should they, taking the malignity of their pavement into fair and equitable consideration?

Belgrade streets, however, though utterly unsuitable to pedestrian locomotion, are by no means devoid of the picturesque element, chiefly supplied to them by the lower classes of their frequenters and inhabitants, who have hitherto adhered with touching conservatism to their national costume, long since forgone by the bureaucracy as well as by the wealthier merchants and tradesmen of the capital. The dress worn by nine out of ten differs but little from that of the provincial Turk, and is practically identical with that worn by the Mahomedan Bosniac or Herzegovinian. It consists of a loose dark-blue braided jacket, worn over a white or blue cotton shirt—a broad red worsted sash, wound tightly several times round the diaphragmatic region—baggy blue breeches, *opanke* or leg-guards tied on with strips of untanned leather—heavy blucher boots, and a dark crimson fez with a bright blue tassel. The Servians are for the most part big and burly, though clumsily built fellows, and this costume, in which they are quite at their ease, becomes them much better than the coats and trousers of Western civilisation. I cannot conscientiously accord the smallest tribute of admiration to the women's dresses, as a rule hideous in shape and dull in colour. The head-gear alone is pretty, consisting of a coloured handkerchief intertwined neatly amongst the hair-plaits, which, besides, are frequently adorned with gold and silver coins in a highly decorative manner. But the rest of the toilette is ugly and ungraceful. A small cloth jacket, armless and incapable of meeting in

front, is worn over a chemise of cambric or linen, crossed over the chest by a many-folded muslin scarf, which is tied or otherwise fastened behind the waist. Beneath this scarf and below the bust, which rests on or hangs over its upper edge, is a velvet or cloth tightly-fitting bodice, the lower moiety of which is hidden by a heavy, straight, down-falling stuff petticoat, seldom lively in hue, and reaching to the ankles. Convenient as this costume undoubtedly is for wet-nursing, it is as unquestionably extremely unbecoming to ninety-nine girls and women out of a hundred. Servian dames are apt to become conspicuously corpulent whilst still in the prime of life, and even young girls are generally more exuberantly formed than is consistent with attractiveness in a display of their pectoral charms so lavish and uncompromising that it cannot fail to draw particular attention to that which is too frequently—let us say, superfluous. Beauty of face or figure, moreover, is curiously rare amongst Servian women, and nothing short of the exceptional, in both respects, will carry off so inartistic and, if I may venture to use the term, provocative a dress. Large hands and feet, thick joints, rough-hewn features, and sallow complexions are the rule with the sex which, in Servia, it were somewhat less than veracious to qualify as "fair." The Servian "ministering angels" are decidedly massive. Whatever good looks they may possess in early girlhood rapidly fade away or are obliterated by premature *embonpoint;* for they marry phenomenally young, and are frequently grandmothers at six or seven-and-twenty, by which time they are, with rare exceptions, wrinkled,

yellow, and shapeless, whilst their husbands are still comely and stalwart young men.

When I first became initiated in the manners and customs of the Servian capital, during the winter of 1865-6, Belgrade owned the sway of two several and distinct rulers, the Christian Hospodar occupying the Czillak throne, as it were, by Imperial Ottoman license, and the Moslem Pasha entrusted by the Padishah with the command of the Turkish military forces at that time occupying several strongholds of strategic importance in the Principality. The chief of these fortresses was the historically famous citadel of Belgrade, one of whose many sieges is immortalised in the annals of English Opera. Strongly garrisoned by picked Turkish troops, this powerful fortress was the seat of Ottoman authority on Servian territory. In a huge yellow Konak, or palace, standing upon the parade-ground at the very summit of the broad bluff described in a previous chapter, and commanding an extensive view of both rivers, resided Ali Riza Pasha, the then military governor of Belgrade, in all the pomp and splendour appropriate to his high office. His establishment was complete, comprising an extensive hareem, duly guarded by eunuchs, the proper complement of mollahs and imams for regular performance of divine service at the citadel mosque, pipe-bearers, ferashes, accomplished cooks and confectioners, and skilled compounders of creaming, perfumed coffee. Ali Riza was a kindly, jolly old Mahomedan gentleman, faithfully observant of the tradition of Turkish hospitality, by no means averse to moderate draughts of the "sparkling sherbet" known amongst

Giaours by the name of champagne, and shrewdly suspected by the officers of his staff of chronic submission to the process of hen-pecking, as performed upon him in the privacy of the zenana by his khanoum, or leading wife, an old lady of masterful disposition and variable temper. His popularity in Belgrade was extraordinary, taking into consideration the circumstance that he was the living personification of a foreign yoke extremely distasteful to the Servian nation, and he contrived to keep upon excellent terms not only with Prince Michael Obrenovich, at that time the reigning Hospodar, but with such uncompromising Servian patriots as Garashianin, Marinovich, and Blasnavaz, Cabinet Ministers well known to be bent upon ridding their country of Turkish suzerainty by any means, fair or foul, that might be found available. Belgrade, of course, was practically at Ali Riza's mercy; his mighty ordnance commanded every portion of the city, which, as its inhabitants were fully aware, he could level with the dust in a few hours if provoked to hostile action by any rebellious conduct on their part. But he conducted himself publicly with such excellent discretion, and was so unaffectedly amiable and jovial in private life, that the Belgradians could not help liking him, though they hated the government he represented.

The other ruler of Servia, Prince Michael, third of his dynasty, lived in a modest little house, dignified with the title of Konak, on the Terazia—the same dwelling, considerably enlarged and improved, however, during the present reign, in which his successor, Milan Obrenovich IV., now resides. His Highness, one of the most

sensible, intelligent, and honest gentlemen ever doomed by adverse destiny to devote his life to the service of an ignorant, treacherous, and bloodthirsty race, kept up no State whatsoever, but spent the whole of his time and the greater part of his official income in carrying out benevolent projects for the advancement of his subjects' material prosperity. Belgrade, twenty years ago, was a nest of native and foreign intrigue, in which many a brood of plots were hatched, not to speak of those that were addled or prematurely sate upon by some perspicuous diplomatist. The Prince was heavily weighted by his obligations at home and his engagements abroad. His countrymen were incessantly egging him on to throw off the hated Turkish yoke, under pain of forcible dethronement or assassination; Russian agents were never weary of tempting him to rebel against his suzerain; and he lay under suspicion, on the part of the Western Powers, of intriguing by turns with Vienna and St. Petersburg towards the attainment of national aims which were regarded with absolute disapproval by the Sultan's allies, at that time bent upon preserving the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. In reality, he kept aloof, as strictly as his Ministers would allow him so to do, from all the plots and machinations of which he was generally believed to be the Head Centre —was steadfastly faithful to the allegiance he had sworn when his election to the Hospodariat was confirmed by the Sublime Porte, and deeply absorbed in the fulfilment of his princely duties. I well remember one morning, during my first mission to Belgrade, in the course of a long and interesting conversation with His Highness,

drawing his attention to certain reports that had been circulated in Parisian and Viennese political circles respecting some projected encroachments upon Turkish prerogative about to be (so ran the story) attempted by himself at the instigation of the Russian Government. The Prince listened to me attentively for some time, a faint smile playing round the corners of his mouth, and then, laying his hand on my arm, with a word of polite excuse for the interruption, rose and led me to a window of his study from which a view of part of the town could be obtained. "Do me the pleasure," he observed, "of looking for a few seconds at those streets and at the people walking about them. They are not paved—you cannot call that irregular crust of angular stones paving; they are not drained, nor are the houses that overlook them; at night they are lighted by a few wretched petroleum lamps, just sufficient to make darkness visible. The people stumbling painfully over their shameful surface are illiterate, poor, and for the most part miserable. And yet this is my capital, in every respect superior to the provincial towns of Servia, which again are models of civilised comfort compared to the villages in which the greater number of my countrymen are destined to abide from the day of their birth to that of their death. Can you, who know how I have been educated and, I believe, do me the honour to credit me with some intelligence and patriotism, seriously bring yourself to believe that I am bending such energies as God has endowed me with to pursuing mere shadows of so-called national independence and personal aggrandisement, when I have but

to look out of my window, thus, to see my real duties spread out plainly before my very eyes? Is it not more reasonable to suppose that I busy myself with endeavouring to ameliorate my people's hard lot, to increase their well-being, and to bring, by degrees, the blessings of civilisation within their reach, than to filch from the Sultan, by crooked and dishonourable means, one tatter after another of the ragged suzerainty he is still entitled to exercise over Servia? Are our grievances so insufferable that they should constrain me to act in a manner repugnant to my sense of honour as a sovereign and a gentleman? We are not independent of Turkey, it is true. Are we, as yet, fit to be so? We are under obligations to pay annual tribute to the Porte. For years past I have been unable to induce the Skuptchina to vote the sums required for that purpose, and so the tribute has remained unpaid. Turkish garrisons occupy our fortresses; but do they levy any taxes or contributions upon the people? No; on the contrary, they spend much money amongst us, especially here, in Belgrade. I wish them away—I should not be a true Servian, else—but they do my subjects no harm, and do not interfere in the least with the native government of the country. Let me assure you, once for all, whatever you may hear to the contrary at the Consulates and from my political enemies, that my intellect and will, such as they are, are entirely devoted to promoting the real interests of my compatriots, not to remedying imaginary wrongs or striving to attain delusive goals; and that I turn a deaf ear to many seductive suggestions, by adopting which I cannot

doubt, alas!—so misguided are some of the leading spirits in my native land—I should largely increase my popularity. But I consent to be misjudged at home, if only foreign Powers will suffer me to follow the path of duty I have traced out for myself; and I beg you to represent that as my fixed purpose to all those influential personages interested in the fortunes of Servia with whom you may happen to be brought into contact when you leave this country."

These striking remarks of the worthy and undeservedly luckless Michael Obrenovich, every assertion contained in which has been fully borne out by subsequent events, could not then be published, despite their great intrinsic interest, for reasons only too obvious at the time of their utterance. In fact, their publication would probably have cost him his life at the hands of certain ultra-patriots, who even then held him to be a tame reactionary, and were engaged in a conspiracy with the supporters of the rival dynasty, which conspiracy culminated in the Prince's barbarous murder two years and a half later. I took notes of them, however, within an hour of their utterance, and their purport was communicated confidentially to the British Government by Mr. Longworth, then H.M.'s Diplomatic Agent at Belgrade, with the effect, as I have reason to believe, of considerably modifying the official view thitherto entertained in Downing Street respecting Prince Michael and his projects. The impression they made upon our representative, a staunch Turkophile but warm personal admirer of the Prince's many virtues and talents, was a very deep one; and I have deemed

them sufficiently remarkable, though emanating from a man who was laid in his grave eighteen years ago, to merit reproduction in this place.

Life in Belgrade under the mixed reign, if I may call it so, of Ali Riza Pasha and of the never sufficiently to be lamented Prince Michael, was dull and monotonous in the extreme. The only society worthy of the name was to be found of evenings at the Consulates, the chiefs of which, having a diplomatic character, received natives and foreigners of distinction pretty frequently, but altogether *sans cérémonie*, in their salons. These hospitalities were never returned by the Servian Ministers, and the only really wealthy Belgradian, a salt-merchant named Misha, having married into the family of the pretender, Karageorgevich, was a person rather to be avoided than courted. The Prince himself, separated, through her wanton infidelity to him, from a wife who was one of the most beautiful women in Europe, and whom he adored to the end of his days despite the vileness of her conduct, lived in almost unbroken seclusion. Once or twice during each winter he gave a State dinner, followed by a reception, to which the members of the Corps Consulaire and the Cabinet Ministers, military officers of high rank, parliamentary officials, and ecclesiastical dignitaries, were invited. But the Servian dames, no matter how exalted the official position of their husbands, never, with one or two distinguished exceptions, sat at the Prince's table. Gathered round the doors of his dining-room, they waited impatiently until, by rising, he gave his male guests the signal for retiring to coffee and

cigarettes in the adjacent *fumoir*, and then were admitted to the vacated apartment, where they made a clean sweep of the fruits, sweets, and bonbons, filling their pockets with everything edible upon which they could lay their hands. After concluding this raid with an exhaustiveness more creditable to their appetites than to their breeding, those amongst them who had been honoured by a special invitation to "spend the evening at the Konak" trooped off to the principal drawing-room, where they were regaled with Russian tea, *pasticcieria*, and ices, until the gentlemen presently joined them. There was no music or dancing at these simple and somewhat patriarchal entertainments, which invariably terminated before eleven o'clock, by which hour the kind, sad amphitryon had withdrawn to his study, perhaps accompanied by his trusted friend and councillor, Garashianin, tallest of all European statesmen, there to peruse despatches received from abroad, or consider some foreign proposition, or, in a word, to labour in his country's service until an early hour in the morning.

From the Kalemeydan to Topchidereh is barely two miles, one fifth of which distance must be penitentially performed over the rough boulders and petrified kidney potatoes of the Terazia itself, and a telescopic series of streets, branching out of its western extremity, which grow small by degrees and beautifully less as they approach the former glacis of the fortress, now converted into a public garden liberally planted with limes and beeches. The remaining four-fifths consist of a good metalled road, running parallel with the right bank of the Save for more than half its length. In a

shady nook of the Kalemeydan the band of whatever regiment may happen for the time being to be garrisoning the citadel performs, throughout the summer months, during the afternoons of Sundays and saints' days. As the Greek Orthodox Calendar may confidently be reckoned upon for a supply of saints averaging at least three per diem for the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year, one is seldom disappointed in the matter of hearing the band, however casually one may stroll up to the Kalemeydan between five and seven P.M. from the first of May to the thirtieth of September. It would be somewhat difficult, from a musical point of view, to define the exact class of noise most closely resembling the sounds resulting from a Servian military band's executive feats. To native ears these remarkable achievements teem with melody, tender or inspiriting, and with harmonies of the most enchanting character. But foreigners, trained to the oral apprehension of Western melodic forms and harmonic sequences, are apt to be hopelessly gravelled by the Servian compositions, as well as by the local manner of their interpretation. The national airs, if airs they be, are difficult to grasp, chiefly from the circumstance that they lack coherency, and consist, so to speak, of a number of random notes strung together anyhow and making up a perplexing total that can scarcely be said to exhibit an intelligible beginning, middle, or end. The method of their rendering is apparently of a no less happy-go-lucky character than that of their construction. Each individual bandsman seems to be playing his instrument upon personal principles, nobly emancipate from the conventional

trammels of orchestral association. He chooses his own time and key, just as they happen to suggest themselves to his fancy, and sticks to or varies them in obedience to inward impulses that no man save himself can account for. The result of such inspirations, expressed through wood and brass by forty or fifty of these fine spontaneous fellows, is extremely curious. But George Washington, who could not lie, was a very Ananias in comparison to the person, not of Servian birth, who should deliberately assert that the effect of these performances upon their foreign auditors is a pleasurable one.

Topchidereh and the Kalemeydan are the alpha and omega of Servian out-door recreation. They have more than one characteristic in common. Both are open-air places of public resort, more or less tastefully laid out in flower-beds, shrubberies, gravel-walks, and plots of turf. Both are provided with *mehanas*, or drinking-taverns, in which vast quantities of Pançova beer may be ingurgitated for the Servian equivalent of a few pence. Both are rendered attractive, or the reverse, according to taste, by musical marvels of the description above alluded to. Finally, both owe their horticultural adornments to the industry of convicts, who keep them in excellent order from one year's end to another, and the clank of whose chains, as they sweep the paths or water the lawns in gangs, linked together by one wrist and ankle apiece, is scarcely calculated to stimulate feelings of cheerful confidence in the timorous breast. There is something essentially Servian in the notion of utilising convict labour for the embellishment of the two fashionable promenades frequented by the best society of

the capital, and of bringing the vilest malefactors of the country into immediate contact with the foreign Envoys and their families, as well as with their native magnates, who are bound to take their daily "constitutional" in the gardens of Topchidereh or the Kalemeydan, for the simple reason that there is no other spot in or near Belgrade to which they can repair for that purpose. Not less strikingly illustrative of Servian views touching the "fitness of things" is the fact that, although the citadel of Belgrade is the chief pride of every patriot Czillak's heart, whilst the *château* of Topchidereh was the favourite residence of Milosch Obrenovich, the leading popular hero of latter-day Servia and founder of the now reigning dynasty, both these historically interesting buildings have been ruthlessly turned into convict prisons. Milosch, originally a pig-driver, then a conspirator against Black George, the first of the modern Servian Hospodars (whom he overthrew, took prisoner, and finally caused to be brutally murdered), and subsequently Prince of Servia, built the Topchidereh Konak for his own special delectation, and was wont to inhabit it, even during the winter months, in preference to his town-house. He was a just and sagacious ruler of the people to whom he owed his elevation to princely rank and power; but in private life he practised the seven deadly sins with genuine enthusiasm and infinite relish. If he evinced a marked preference for any of them in particular, it was for intemperance and incontinence; but those who knew him most intimately have assured me that every description of vice "came natural" to him. Providence, moreover, had gifted him with a fine furious

temper that brooked no opposition, an indomitable will, and passions of unusual vigour and vivacity. These he delighted to indulge, to the very top of their bent, in his suburban retreat of Topchidereh, which accordingly was the scene of some uncommonly lively "high-jinks" whilst it harboured its original proprietor.

The road to Topchidereh is a pretty one and, what is still more creditable to it, an instructive one, that is to say, to the intelligent and inquisitive foreigner desirous of obtaining insight into Servian manners and customs by judicious inquiry founded upon ocular observation. It will not fail to escape the notice of such a person, as he drives along that pleasant highway in some Consular acquaintance's open carriage, that the roadside is profusely ornamented, at irregular intervals, by a considerable number of plain black wooden crosses; and in all probability this circumstance will at first suggest to him that the Servians, despite their ferocious aspect, must be endowed with a good deal of genuine religious feeling, inasmuch as they adorn even their country roads with so many emblems of Christianity. Curiosity, however, may prompt him—as it did myself, under similar circumstances—to ask his guide, philosopher, and friend what may be the exact purpose or significance of all the crosses planted along either roadside? "Those black crosses?" was the reply I received; "oh, they are set up to mark the spots upon which the corpses of murdered men have been found, and beneath them lie the remains whose discovery they commemorate. If you stay here a few weeks, and take your daily drive on the Topchidereh road, as you are doing now, ten to one you will see

some poor wretch being crammed into a hole by the wayside, scarcely big enough to hold his carcase. When anybody is assassinated here, the persons who happen to notice the corpse, as it lies on the road or elsewhere, take precious good care not to meddle with it, but go their way, and, as a rule, say 'nothing to nobody' about what they have seen. There the body continues, therefore, to lie—sometimes for a couple of days and nights—till some foreigner sees it, talks about it in Belgrade, and, through his loquacity, the fact of its being likely to become a nuisance reaches the knowledge of the police authorities. As soon as they come to know of it, they send out a gendarme with a spade and pick on his shoulder, in the direction of the murdered man. When the gendarme comes up to the corpse he proceeds, firstly, to turn out its pockets, secondly, to pull off its boots and jacket, and thirdly, to measure off its length approximatively with his spade. Having ascertained, within an inch or two, how long it is, he then addresses himself to the digging of a hole large enough, or thereabouts, for the body's permanent accommodation. When he thinks the hole is deep enough, he thrusts the dead man into it, fills up with earth, and stamps all down to the level of the roadway; next day he brings out one of these black crosses, and drives it into the freshly turned soil. That is the whole business. There is no useless trouble taken about identifying the corpse—no inquisitorial formalities, or bother of any sort. Why should there be? say the Servians. The man is dead. No inquest, or other fussy procedure, will bring him to life. All that is necessary is to put him safely under ground,

and mark his place of interment with a religious symbol. You will see for yourself," thus concluded my informant, the then British Diplomatic Agent in Servia. A few days later I *did* see for myself. A murdered Austrian sailor was undergoing the operation above described at the hands, or rather at the feet, of a gigantic gendarme, not two hundred yards outside Belgrade on the Topchidereh road, as I drove by in Mr. Longworth's landau. The gendarme had miscalculated the length of the grave, which was nearly a foot short for its tenant (whom he had contrived to squeeze into it by main force), and was stamping with all his might upon some still protruding portions, in order to save himself the trouble of digging out a few more spadesful of earth.

CHAPTER VIII.

SERVIAN PRINCES AND THE TRAGEDY OF TOPCHIDEREH.

Of the two rival families, members of which have alternately ruled the roost in Servia since the end of the last century, it may be said with absolute truth that both were admirable specimens of the savage race from which they sprung, and faithful exponents of the manners and morals current then as now in their native country. I use the words manners and morals for lack of English substantives to express their exact converse. The founders of these families, represented at the present moment by King Milan Obrenovich, the reigning sovereign of Servia, and Prince Peter Karageorgevich, an exiled "loafer" resident at Pesth, were, considered from a social point of view, "persons of no account." Milosch was a pig-driver. Kara George was a practical patriot, of the brigand variety. In more than one respect these remarkable men resembled one another closely—as, indeed, did all the choicer spirits of Servia some eighty or ninety years ago. Bold, unscrupulous, ignorant, astute, and treacherous, they were unexceptionable national types. Milosch was a thought the more cunning of the two; George surpassed his wilier rival in fierce, brutal courage. Neither of them owned a family name. Milosch,

when he first came to the front in Servian home politics, assumed the surname of Obrenovich, to which he had not the least right, for he was the son, by a second marriage, of a woman whose first husband's name was Obren. The syllable "vich," in all Sclav languages, means "the son of," and is tacked on to Christian names in order to indicate that the bearers are the sons of somebody—as Petrovich, the son of Peter, Jovanovich, the son of John, &c. The Sclav *vich*, in fact, corresponds to the Hebrew *ben*, the Welsh *ap*, the Scottish *mac* and the Irish *O'*. Now Milosch was anything but the son of Obren, so his assumption of that worthy's name as his patronymic, duly to be transmitted to his descendants, was, to say the least of it, fraudulent. On the other hand, Black George, the ancestor of the Karageorgevichs, earned his prefix of "Kara" from his enemies, the Turks, partly by the amazing darkness of his deeds and partly by the abnormal duskiness of his complexion. He was that sort of masterful and impulsive person whom it would be delicate flattery to describe as a bloody-minded tyrant and ferocious assassin. On one occasion, some story unfavourable to his mother's reputation for chastity having reached his ears, he cut off the old lady's head with his own hands, and set it in a beehive, not with a view to nourishing the bees, but in sheer wanton barbarity. Later on, during a skirmish with the Osmanli troops, in which his father received a wound that disabled him from retreating before the victorious foe, Kara George drew his pistol and shot his limping parent through the heart. Having thus, by deliberately murdering both the authors of his being,

sufficiently proved to his admiring compatriots what manner of man he was, he completed his claims to their suffrages for the Hospodarship by butchering in cold blood every Turkish prisoner taken by his "patriot bands" in the course of a long and tedious insurrectionary war, and was eventually elected by acclamation to that exalted post, the Ottoman Government being only too glad to confirm his appointment, as the next best means of keeping so truculent a bandit quiet to that of cutting off his head. The Porte would infinitely have preferred the latter method of dealing with him; but Kara George was not to be caught by force or strategy —so the sagacious children of Islam installed him in office as a vassal of the Padishah and, as soon as he was fairly settled down upon his new throne, opened negotiations with his local rival in order to get rid of him permanently.

In Milosch, falsely called Obrenovich, Turkey found an apt instrument wherewith to achieve her objects, and a good deal more, in fact, than she desired to effect. That stalwart and ambitious swineherd was a man of great natural capacity, totally uneducated, but gifted with diplomatic instinct, fervid eloquence, and a faculty for organisation of which his redoubtable adversary was altogether devoid. Secretly assisted by Turkish gold, he conspired successfully against Black George and overthrew him. Later on, that irrepressible parricide contrived, in his turn, to oust Milosch from Hospodariat and country and to reinstate himself upon the Servian throne. Milosch narrowly escaped capture, which he well knew to be a convertible term with death, and fled

to Vienna, where he abode, unremittingly plotting with his partisans in Servia and the Banat through confidential agents, until the moment appeared ripe for his reappearance on his native soil. His machinations were to a certain extent countenanced by the Austrian as well as the Ottoman Government, Black George, whilst in power, having proved himself an altogether intolerable neighbour to the Powers on both Servian frontiers. To be brief, Milosch organised a general rising of his adherents; putting himself at their head, he encountered Kara George in the field and vanquished him, the Black Knes surrendering himself a prisoner of war upon honourable conditions. Milosch took a solemn oath upon the crucifix to hold his captive's life sacred, and to accord him kindly treatment throughout the remainder of his natural existence. He kept his oath in the following characteristic manner.

The founder of the Obrenovich dynasty, whilst he ruled his savage subjects with a rod of iron, and was indefatigable during the hours of the day in personally superintending the State affairs of his Principality, made a point of never denying himself any physical indulgence which his commanding position enabled him to procure. In a barbaric sort of a way, he was an eminent voluptuary—something coarse in his tastes, and rough and ready in his methods of ministering to them, but, on the whole, conspicuously successful in conducting his pleasures so as never to incur the self-reproach of having failed to gratify any passion or caprice suggested to him by his animal instincts. A voracious eater and potent drinker, he was wont to celebrate nocturnal orgies at his

suburban villa of Topchidereh, the remembrance of which Gargantuesque festivities still lingers in the minds of some venerable Servian patriots, admitted to share the Prince's revelry at a time when their own capacities for the consumption of barbecued pig and plum-brandy were unabated by the inroads of time, but who do not hesitate to confess that Milosch could eat and drink down the best of them thirty years ago, though he was then an elderly man, whilst they were in the prime of life.

One of his most intimate and trusted friends and councillors—Gospodin Garashianin, then Prime Minister of Servia—told me, twenty-two years ago, a curious little family story, happily illustrative of the recklessness with which the grim old Hospodar every now and anon gave rein to his criminal impulses. His Excellency, chatting one afternoon with me upon the secret history of Milosch's reign, observed, "You have doubtless noticed that my wife is lame of one leg. Shall I tell you how she became so? Thirty years ago I was to Milosch what I am now (1865) to his son. I had not long married, and my wife was a very handsome young woman, to whom I was passionately attached. We were the Hospodar's guests at Topchidereh, his summer palace. Had I been his brother he could not have treated me with more demonstrative affection and consideration. One day he charged me with a message to the Skuptschina, then in session at Kragujevacz. Of course I obeyed his commands. My wife, who was chief lady-in-waiting to the Princess, remained in the palace. Our apartments were on the second floor, facing the flower-garden. Within four-and-twenty hours of my

departure Milosch roused my wife from sleep by knocking at her bedroom door and demanding entrance. Although all but terrified out of her wits, she refused to open the door, whereupon he burst it in with his shoulder and rushed towards the bed. She, however, had risen and thrown open the double lattice of the window, which reached to the floor. As he advanced towards her with outstretched hands, she sprang out into the air without an instant's hesitation, and, falling heavily to the ground from a height of nearly forty feet, snapped her right thigh-bone in twain. It was badly set by a clumsy army surgeon, and I returned from Kragujevacz a few days later to find her lamed for life. What could I do? I might have killed him and no one would have blamed me—no, not he himself, for he was fully conscious that he had violated the most sacred obligations of friendship and hospitality, and that his life belonged to me if I chose to take it. But I loved my country, and knew only too well that no other man, save Milosch, was capable of guiding it through the sea of trouble then surrounding it to a comparatively safe harbour. So I not only spared him, but continued to serve him faithfully to the last hour of his life. Nor did I lose his respect by abstaining from a well-merited vengeance, for he appreciated the motives that prompted my sacrifice; and ever after, when my wife's name was mentioned in his presence, he would say, with a sardonic chuckle, 'Yes, yes, she is a noble matron; in fact, she is the only absolutely virtuous woman I ever came across in Servia.'"

Shortly after the above characteristic incident, Milosch

held revel one night at Topchidereh until an unusually late hour, surrounded by a few of his chosen cronies of both sexes. At supper he partook immoderately of slightly underdone roast pork, his favourite food, and washed down that indigestible *pabulum* with unusually deep draughts of slievovizza (the "daughter of the plum"), a fiery national tipple much affected by the hard-headed Hospodar in his hours of relaxation.

Upon what trifles may depend the fate of a hero! Full of swineflesh and ardent spirits, Milosch went to bed that night in a peculiarly pleasant frame of mind; but, as might not unreasonably have been anticipated under the circumstances, Ephialtes soon perched upon his breast, and there sate heavily, hatching dreadful dreams, which ran riot in the fevered brain of the dyspepsia-stricken sleeper. Three times running between midnight and daybreak a terrible vision broke his slumbers. It seemed to him that his implacable foe, Black George, stood by his bedside with drawn kandjar, in act to plunge the gleaming weapon into his breast, and that he himself, paralysed by affright, was unable to raise an arm wherewith to ward off the impending stab. At the termination of the third edition of this gruesome dream Milosch awoke, bathed in cold sweat, his scant hair standing on end. It was just at the dawn of day. He called to the body-servant who always slept across the threshold of his bedchamber, and commanded him instantly to summon the aide-de-camp on duty. Whilst awaiting the advent of that officer, he hastily wrote a few lines to the Commandant of Semendria, in a casemate of which fortress Kara George was then confined. When the aide-de-

camp, only half awake, entered the room, Milosch handed to him a sealed paper, with the words "Ride to Semendria without drawing bridle, save to change horses. Give this to the Commandant. Within ten minutes of receiving it he will deliver to you Kara George's head, which you will bring to me immediately. Go!"

Milosch's barbarous order, the outcome of a mere nightmare, was obeyed to the letter. The deposed Prince had just dined and was smoking a chibouk with his post-prandial coffee, when his custodian entered his prison, attended by four soldiers, who seized Black George without a syllable of warning and threw him down upon the floor with his face to the earth. Then one man knelt upon his back, and two others gripped his arms, whilst the fourth hacked off his head with a heavy yataghan. In less time than Milosch had prescribed for the perpetration of this atrocious murder, the ex-Hospodar's head was handed to the officer commissioned to take charge of it; and a few hours later it was laid at Milosch Obrenovich's feet, who smiled grimly as he recognised the ghastly lineaments of his old rival, and muttering, "From thee, at least, I am safe!" rewarded his messenger of blood with a handful of ducats. I tell this grisly tale as it was told to me by one of Milosch's most distinguished friends and companions, who had continued to render him faithful and inestimable service to the day of his death, and who, whilst frankly condemning Milosch's cruelty and breach of faith in causing the assassination of Kara George, always spoke of his fierce old master as "the truest of Servian patriots, to whom his countrymen yet unborn would owe for all time to

come an inextinguishable debt of gratitude." As a matter of fact, Milosch ruled Servia wisely and beneficially. He was a despot, dealing out justice according to his lights in a sudden and heavy-handed way, peculiarly suitable to the ignorant, stiff-necked, vengeance-loving people submitted to his sway. The Czillaks were mortally afraid of him, and he therefore enjoyed their unbounded respect. Those who owned comely wives or daughters kept them carefully out of his sight during his periodical tours in the provinces—unless, indeed, they wished to obtain some special favour or boon at his hands, when they would not infrequently bring feminine attractions to bear upon him, seldom unsuccessfully. And when at last he died peacefully in his bed, full of years and honours, his people mourned his loss with unmistakable sincerity. He left two sons, the elder of whom only survived him a short time, and left no mark upon Servian history. The younger reigned under the title of Michael Obrenovich III. I subjoin the particulars of his barbarous assassination, as related to me by two of the persons who witnessed it.

The gardens of Topchidereh, as I mentioned before, constitute the chief fashionable lounge and afternoon rendezvous of Belgrade Society. They consist of two sections, upon a sort of debateable ground between which stands the summer palace built by Milosch Obrenovich shortly after he acquired the Topchidereh estate, and subsequently the favourite residence of himself and his successors upon the Servian throne. Approaching the Konak from the Belgrade main road the first section entered by your carriage is that fronting the house. In

it are situate flower-gardens, forcing-houses, pavilions, terraces, and fountains, all belonging to the so-called "foreign pleasure-grounds," created by Prince Michael, with the aid of skilled Viennese landscape-gardeners, upon the model of one of his favourite youthful haunts —the Imperial enclosure at Schönbrunn. Nearly in a line with the left wing of the konak is a huge *mehana*, or inn, in which excellent Austrian beer and certain rough-and-ready eatables of local popularity—such as fresh caviare spread an inch thick upon slips of brown bread, pickled fish and goat's-milk cheese—are retailed, as well as good old brown slievovizza, a wholesome if somewhat fiery dram native to the Principality. Facing this rude hostelry is a large square place upon which carriages remain drawn up whilst their owners take constitutionals at a snail's pace in the winding walks, admirably gravelled and kept in perfect order by gangs of leg-ironed convicts, or investigate the family arrangements of the million or so of frogs that inhabit the ornamental waters of Topchidereh, where they spend their time chiefly in vocal exercises, only interrupted when the band plays—a circumstance from which it may be inferred that Servian music is to their taste, as, indeed, it may well be. The other section of Topchidereh grounds commences immediately behind the *mehana*, and, to lovers of the picturesque, is far more attractive than the artificial parterres and clipped shrubberies of Prince Michael's somewhat formal pleasaunce. In Topchidereh Park, Nature has, or had when I last strolled through its precincts, been left a good deal to herself. Beyond the planting of some avenues of stately

trees, the hand of man has done but little to enhance the wild charms of the scene. About four hundred yards down the broad avenue entered from the palace garden, a vast high cover, enclosed in lofty wooden fencing, abuts on the pathway, which it skirts for a considerable distance. This cover, in Prince Michael's time, was plentifully stocked with large and small four-footed game; and the leafy trees that fringe its margin afford such an agreeable shade to pedestrians during the fierce afternoon heats of a Servian summer, that this portion of the park is unquestionably the pleasantest resort within the reach of Belgradians from May to October. It was Prince Michael's custom to stroll up and down this particular avenue after his early dinner, cigar in mouth and accompanied by one or more of his near relatives or intimate acquaintances. He loved to linger under the umbrageous canopy, nearly a quarter of a mile in length, afforded by the overhanging branches of tall beeches and sturdy oaks, most of which were familiar friends of his early childhood. It was in that very avenue that he fell, stricken to death by the assassin's bullet, the victim of an inconceivably base and ruthless conspiracy. There, ere he had gasped out his last breath, was he barbarously hacked and hewn by the kandjars of his murderers, who inflicted over thirty ghastly wounds upon his defenceless body before they turned their backs upon it, and left the good and gentle Prince weltering in his blood, a maimed, disfigured, and lifeless corpse.

On the tenth of June, 1868, Michael Obrenovich III., with whom his aunt and cousin, Anka and Katrine, had been dining, strolled out at about 4 P.M. with the two

ladies and his personal aide-de-camp, young Garashianin, the eldest son of the renowned Minister-President, Michael's most faithful counsellor and trusted friend. The small party, followed by the Prince's body-servant, Mita, entered the park from the Rondeau, and walked slowly towards the preserves. As they approached the boundary fence, three men emerged from some brushwood to the left of the path, and advanced towards the Prince, bowing profoundly. His Highness, who was unarmed, though in undress uniform, turned deadly pale as he returned their salute and muttered "Gospodar pamiloi!" (God have mercy on me) under his breath. Swerving aside, cap in hand, a little to the left to make room for him to pass, the three men waited till his back was turned to them, when one of them, exclaiming, "Knowest thou Radavanovich?" drew a revolver from the breast of his jacket, and fired point-blank at the Prince, who cried out to Captain Garashianin, "Save me, brother!" and fell backwards, shot through the neck. Almost simultaneously with his fall the other two assassins discharged their pistols into the Prince's head, and then turned like tigers upon the remaining members of the august group. Anka Obrenovich, a woman of uncommon spirit and courage, sprang upon Joko Radavanovich, with a shriek of fury, and seizing him by the hair with both hands, strove with the strength of despair to throw him to the ground; but he deliberately discharged two bullets into her head and left breast, and she dropped stone-dead upon the body of her murdered nephew. Meanwhile young Garashianin, whilst in the act of drawing his sabre, was shot down by Lazar Marich,

the second conspirator; and Katrine Obrenovich, who upon seeing her mother fall had taken to flight, screaming at the top of her voice for mercy, was picked off, as though she had been a running hare, by the third, Costa Radavanovich, Joko's brother, who fired three shots in rapid succession at the panic-stricken girl, all of which took effect. Mita, the lackey, who stood still as though paralysed by sheer terror, was dealt with by a fourth ruffian, named Stanoe Rogich, who appears to have acted as a reserve to his fellow-murderers, and who, as soon as he appeared on the scene of action, promptly smote poor Mita to the earth. As soon as they had secured themselves from interruption in their bloody enterprise, Joko Radavanovich and Marich drew their kandjars and set to work to mangle the Prince's remains, which they did to such gruesome purpose that only his right arm was subsequently found to be free from gashes or fractures. So numerous, indeed, were his wounds that, when his body was afterwards being prepared for embalming and exposure to public view on a bier, according to Servian custom, two skilled surgeons were occupied during some thirty hours in patching it up so as to render it presentable; and, after they had finished their melancholy task, the dead Prince's face had to be thickly painted in order to conceal its scars from the illustrious personages deputed by foreign Sovereigns to attend his funeral.

Prince Michael had been repeatedly warned by anonymous letters of the danger impending upon him from a desperate and influential conspiracy against his life, organised by unscrupulous partisans of the rival dynasty;

and one of these communications even especially cautioned him against taking his afternoon strolls in the Kossutniak; but, when urged by his friend, Senator Philip Cristich, to take heed to these monitions, he expressed his conviction that none of his countrymen, whom he loved and served so well, would ever raise a hand against him, and peremptorily declined to take any precautions against imaginary perils. He paid with his life for his generous confidence in the treacherous and sanguinary Serbs. The plot to which he fell a victim, as was subsequently discovered, had doomed several other eminent Servians to death—amongst them old Garashianin, Milivoi Petrovich and Niko Cristich, the Senator's brother. But the assassins told off to murder those gentlemen mistook their instructions; and when Joko and Costa Radavanovich, confident of the conspiracy's entire success, and fully expecting to find Belgrade in arms, the ministers dead and Karageorgevich proclaimed prince, coolly walked into town after butchering their kindly sovereign, they were encountered on the Terazia by the venerable Garashianin, who at once arrested them and caused them to be loaded with chains. Characteristic of Servian imperturbability was the remark made by Joko upon being fettered. He observed, "These irons are exactly twice as heavy as those should be which you have a legal right to put on me," and strode away to the fortress with his guards as unconcernedly as if nothing unusual had happened to him. Lazar Marich was an escaped convict, who had been condemned to hard labour for life for having killed his wife by driving a long nail through her head with a

hammer. When interrogated as to the exact part he had taken in the Prince's slaughter, he replied with a ferocious smile, "Do you think that I, who thought nothing of slaying my own wife with a nail, would stick at such a trifle as shooting down Knes Michael?" Another characteristic Servian utterance, but of more heroic temper than the above cold-blooded deliverances, deserves to be recalled to memory in this necessarily fragmentary and imperfect sketch of the most revolting episode in Servian modern history. The elder Garashianin was himself walking in the so-called "foreign pleasure-grounds" of Topchidereh when the appalling intelligence was conveyed to him that his eldest son had perished in an attempt to defend the Prince against the latter's merciless assailants. All the grand old patriot said was, "That is well. He died, then, in the simple fulfilment of his duty;" and, without another word, he hurried off to Belgrade to take measures for seizing the assassins and preserving public order. To this truly great man, Horatio's description of himself, with but slight alteration, might most fitly be applied. Garashianin was indeed "more an ancient Roman than a Serb." I may mention that, happily, his son, though so severely wounded as to necessitate the amputation of his right arm, recovered health and strength, and is at the present moment a man of considerable mark in his native country. Katrine Obrenovich-Costantinovich was also saved from death by judicious surgical treatment, and subsequently married Milivoi Petrovich, commonly called Blasnavatz, some time regent of Servia during the interregnum between Prince Michael's murder and the

election to the throne of Milan Obrenovich, the present King of Servia.

Capital punishment has never been abolished in Servia. It is rarely inflicted, even upon murderers, through patriotic reluctance on the part of the legal executive to depopulate the country; but when administered to some inveterate homicide whose lethal proclivities are officially felt to be a public inconvenience, the manner of its performance is somewhat sensational. The person condemned to suffer the extreme penalty of the law is chained, standing, to a strong post, driven firmly into the ground. In that position he receives absolution for his sins, during which ceremony the executioner, pistol in hand, steps softly up to him from behind, and shoots him through the back, *à bout portant*. The friends and relatives of the doomed felon generally club together to make up a purse of ducats for the executioner, who is apt to miss a vital part unless his aim be steadied by a judicious pecuniary tonic. If, however, it be made worth his while to spare his "subject" superfluous suffering, he shoots him through the heart with unerring accuracy at the first fire. At the time of Prince Michael's assassination, this functionary was a jovial, burly fellow, universally respected, who took considerable pride in his profession, and whose conscientiousness in keeping his share of a bargain was notorious; for none of his clients, upon whose behalf his palm had been sufficiently greased, had ever required a second shot. On the Kara Bournu or Black Promontory of Belgrade, this honest artist dealt, in due time, with the Prince's murderers, as well as with several

other distinguished Servian politicians concerned in the conspiracy for the extermination of the Obrenovich family and restoration of the Karageorgevich dynasty. The Triumvirs who assumed the reins of Government immediately upon Michael's death, had all three been doomed to share his fate, so it was scarcely to be expected that they should show any mercy to the very men who had deliberately compassed their slaughter. As the backers of these abominable ruffians were well-to-do personages, whose honour was involved in seeing their agents comfortably through all their mundane difficulties, the skilful marksman above alluded to realised so handsome a sum by his dexterous ministrations (from first to last nineteen in number) to the detected conspirators, that he has since been known to give the *coup de grâce* to an old personal friend of impecunious connections, free, gratis, and for nothing!

CHAPTER IX.

LIFE IN CAIRO.—ARAB CHARACTERISTICS.—HELIOPOLIS.

Cairo is a triumphant example of the good taste, judiciously grafted on practicality, which distinguished the Khedive Ismail from other Oriental monarchs—notably from his suzerain, the Commander of the Faithful, and from that very peculiar personage, the King of Kings, Nasr-ed-din. It abounds in wide, well-paved streets, the sidewalks of which are delightfully shaded by sycamores, and lined with splendid villas and luxuriant gardens. These streets, of a straightness that Portland Place itself could not outdo, are watered on the Parisian plan (with certain local modifications), and take their rise from handsome squares, or from cosy little *rondeaux*, the centres of which are green and refreshing with palm-trees and sparkling fountains. Two of them start from the Place de l'Opéra, on either side of the New Hotel, a handsome building facing the Opera House, and built in the latest approved "mitigated Oriental" style. Close to this huge hostelry, as well as to Shepheard's, the rallying-point of the British colony, is the public garden, a large enclosure prettily laid out and duly provided with restaurants, arbours, an artificial lake, wild-fowl, a military band every afternoon from

four to six, and many other attractions too numerous to mention. The garden is surrounded on all sides by handsome buildings, for the most part brand-new and fronted by lofty arcades. In "Shepheard's" Street, as I will take the liberty of christening the thoroughfare in which I used to reside, some uncommonly fine houses have been erected—lofty, solid, and decorative constructions that in no way jar with the general *couleur locale* of the city. From Shepheard's Street, again, branch off a couple of wide thoroughfares, in one of which is situate the palace built by the Duke of Sutherland. At one end of this stately building is the British Agency; at the other, the "Khedive" Club, in which Englishmen admitted to the enjoyment of its privileges can revel in the delights of the London daily and weekly newspapers, magazines, reviews, and comic periodicals—of an excellent English billiard table, a good restaurant, and as much "cayenne" whist as their means will permit of their indulging in. As to evening amusements, there are two pretty little theatres, one dedicated to the lyric drama, the other to comedy and operetta, at which performances are given alternately, so that one need be at no loss how to spend the hours between dinner and bedtime. Moreover, musical cafés abound in Cairo—cafés of considerable dimensions, in which *on est poussé à la consommation* by the strains of Donizetti, Strauss, Wagner! I once heard at the Grand Café Egyptien the "Flying Dutchman" done into quadrilles. Indeed, I would have given much to have transported the great Richard, on a flying carpet or a rôc's back, from Munich to Cairo, that he might listen to the Holländer's awful

utterances transmogrified into the cheeriest of "hands across and down the middle," rendered with an energy that approaches the humorous by stringed orchestras of young Bohemian damsels, brought over *en bloc* from out-of-the-way little towns near the Silesian and Saxon frontiers of the most musical province in Europe. The members of each of these groups of girls are all related to or connected with each other, and keep an almost preternaturally sharp look-out upon one another's conduct. They are also collectively under the supervision of stern *chefs d'orchestre*, whose interest is to keep them together and out of mischief. Whilst contributing materially to the diversions of Cairo, they thus in no way lower its moral tone, nor entice any respectable Egyptian paterfamilias from the exclusive practice of the domestic virtues—which, indeed, considering the scale upon which Egyptian establishments amongst the club and café frequenting classes are conducted, must, one would fancy, make sufficiently heavy demands upon his time and energies. These *cafés jouants*, except in so far as they are supplemented by gambling-houses, are harmless institutions enough. Perhaps the prices at which they dispense refreshments are calculated to startle the European who does not happen to be a millionaire or an adventurer; but it must be remembered that all potable liquids except coffee and Nile water have a long way to come ere they reach the Egyptian capital, and are subjected, moreover, to duties which, in a less lavish and devil-may-care country, would be held to come under the heading of "prohibitive." Light come, light go; money seems, somehow or

other, to be easily got in the Nile Delta—I was nearly saying earned, but stopped myself in time to avoid conveying a totally erroneous impression of the process by which people fill their pockets in those latitudes. It is certainly spent with a noble disregard of petty details that exercises a subtly-demoralising influence upon the thriftiest nature. Egypt is a country in which everybody still worships that venerable and venal deity, hight Bucksheesh, *aliter* Bakshish in Egyptian parlance—known in Europe as Monsieur de Pourboire, Signor Buonamano, Herr von Trinkgeld, &c.

This potent Impersonality (who is old enough to know better, but doesn't) has the whole Egyptian nation prostrate at his cloven feet—aye, and a goodly assortment also of the aliens who ornament the Delta of the Nile with their agreeable and entertaining presence amongst the descendants of Ishmael. The unswerving devotion of "all hands" to the bucksheesh *cultus* is highly gratifying to the moral philosopher in these sceptical if not absolutely unbelieving times. How cheering it is to find a whole people believing implicitly that "by faith in bucksheesh shall ye be saved," and recognising that that belief is thoroughly well founded, which is more than can be said of all the creeds to which humanity pins its faith. And how lovely is the reflection that each individual is at once a votary and a priest of bucksheesh—that he, so to speak, carries about with him a little private shrine, upon which he insists his fellow-worshippers should deposit their offerings, whilst he, in his turn, pays his tribute when he cannot absolutely help doing so. How instructive it is—and how expen-

sive!—to discover that no transaction of everyday life, however insignificant or physically inevitable, and therefore commonplace, can be carried out without the invocation of bucksheesh, and the attribution to him of some unconsidered trifle that by no means enters into your contract or calculations; likewise that his acolytes are so boundlessly receptive in his name, and so tenacious of the honours due to him, that they are never to be satisfied with tribute tendered in conformity with foreign apprehension of his divine deserts, but clamour with amazing vehemence and persistency for contributions which, to the irreverent European intellect, appear altogether out of keeping with the possible importance of any *cultus* whatsoever nowadays. Thus, you present the adroit but melancholy juggler, who, spontaneously and unsolicited, favours you, on the perron of your hotel, with the cup and pellet trick of your guileless youth, with two piastres —an appreciable silver piece covered all over with Arabic inscriptions of a conspicuously valuable and interesting character. He sniffs at you dismally, and murmurs, "That not good for bucksheesh! You give rupee for bucksheesh!" Now a rupee is two shillings, or too nearly so not to inspire sadness in you upon parting with it for ever; and one does not give two shillings, as a rule, in Europe, to an operator in natural magic who performs the cup and pellet trick on a paving-stone, *sub Jove frigido*. Not to do so in Cairo, however, is to run counter to, and treat with contumely, the dearest and most venerated traditions of the national faith. Again, cab-fares appear to be carefully regulated with a benevolent view to keeping the proprietors of these

vehicles in comfortable circumstances ; for a ten minutes' drive costs six shillings, and a contribution to the altar of Bucksheesh into the bargain. But if you should, moved by a passionate desire to forego the customary invocations for once in a way, pay your driver, for such a service as the one alluded to, twelve shillings, twenty-four, five pounds, an Egyptian State loan !—he will, with the fatal exactitude of Death or the tax-gatherer, follow you into the penetralia of your dwelling, muttering or bellowing, whispering plaintively or declaiming menacingly, according to his individual temperament and judgment of your character, the vile and idolatrous shibboleth, "Bucksheesh ! 'ksheesh ! sheeeeeesh !" The Khedive Ismail was a clever and energetic man, but he utterly failed, if he ever attempted, to uproot from Egyptian soil the worship of this foul fetish.

When Hans Makart, the greatest of modern Austrian colourists, was staying in Cairo, he established his *atelié*r in a fine old palace, uninhabited save by himself and a few of his brother artists, but in a room of which the Viceroy himself had been born. It is situate in the most intricate as well as most picturesque *quartier* of Cairo, and can only be discovered by the aid of expert guides, long-suffering donkeys, and unlimited patience. Like most Oriental houses, its exterior affords little or no promise of the decorative magnificence characterising its interior. In this respect it also resembles the Egyptian ladies, who walk about the streets upon shopping expeditions (in which I am told they take even more intense and rapturous delight than my own fair countrywomen) enveloped in a hideous black garment, not unlike

the dismal robes of the Roman Confraternità, which effectually conceals the attractions nature has bestowed upon them, as well as those due to the adornments of millinery and jewellery. But English ladies, who enjoy the privilege of free access to some of the leading Egyptian harems, have informed me that this shapeless, lugubrious vestment covers toilettes of the greatest splendour in material and colour, and *bijouterie* that might awaken envy in the breast of many a titled Western dame. I have listened to thrilling accounts of lockets as large as turkeys' eggs, both faces of which are covered with brilliants of the first water, the size of goodly chick peas; of complete "costumes" from Worth and Madame Elise; of ropes of pearls that would have "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought" the lavish impulses of Lothair himself; of rubies, emeralds, and sapphires, scattered with fine profusion over the surface of undeniable if somewhat exuberant charms. As the Egyptian ladies, so the Egyptian houses. What they are compelled to exhibit to public gaze is of a simplicity frequently amounting to ugliness, whilst that which they reserve for private inspection is gorgeous and ornate in the extreme. The walls of the noble palace in which three or four German artists made their nests in the spring of 1876, are white, lofty, and all but windowless. They line one side of a wretched blind alley, into which a system of squalid and malodorous lanes converges in a tortuous, perplexing, and wholly unreasonable manner. Dustheaps are manifestly considered to be fashionable and ornamental adjuncts to domestic architecture in this venerable quarter. They exhale a mawkish smell, which

is universally popular in European Turkey, and, I suppose, goes with the Mahommedan religion, as it has managed to cross the Mediterranean and settle in Africa. These mounds of sickly refuse are liberally studded with youthful Muslim of both sexes, very much undressed, black-eyed, rhubarb-complexioned, triumphantly dirty, and vociferating at the top of their voices that execrable word—I will not again defile my pen with it!—which begins with a B and ends in a sibilant screech. Meanwhile, the population of the neighbourhood—that is, the male portion of it—is strolling about unconcernedly in an airy and inexpensive costume of hairdresser's gown (blue linen), yellow slippers, and turban; that is all, upon my honour. It is the correct social thing in Cairo to walk out in the streets, exchange the news of the day, transact your business, and call upon your friends, in the above toilette, to which, if the father of a family, you may add a jasmine-stemmed chibouk—the roystering young bachelors of eleven or so smoke cigarettes—and, if you desire to gain a reputation for thoughtfulness, sagacity, and easy circumstances, an odd sort of rosary composed of octagonal beads, many-coloured and jingling, which you draw with an air of philosophical self-introspection slowly through four fingers, letting them fall successively, one by one, as deliberately as though they were drops of laudanum, and an overdose of two or three beads would lead to serious constitutional complications. The staid and meditative gentlemen with the rosaries, I have noticed, now and then stop their counting to take a drink of water, which comes out of a horrible receptacle for liquor looking exactly like a drowned pig, under

which a functionary, fringed with brass goblets, staggers from street to street. He has, if anything, less clothes on than the peripatetic sons of the Prophet to whom he dispenses the lymph that flows from the hideous vessel. One hopes that he makes a good thing of his profession, but I have never yet seen any of the solemn drinkers give him anything for quenching their thirst. Let us return to the old palace, round which these quaint personages incessantly meander, interspersed with donkeys, slinking dogs, innumerable children, apparently in an advanced stage of dropsy, and a hypocritical camel or two, obtrusively careful not to knock down the houses, or squash any of the juvenile Arabs who flit about amongst their legs.

Passing under a broad archway, you enter a large court of irregular shape, out of which several doors lead to suites of apartments, staircases, and cold dark corridors. It matters not what room you go into, you are sure to find something exceedingly beautiful and interesting—either a lovely carved and fretted ceiling, or an inlaid dome, or patchwork panels of the most delightful patterns in coloured woods. Much of this decorative work is by the grand old Arab carvers and inlayers whose place in Egypt knows them no more. The modern and, above all, the contemporary work of this class is very poor in design, and too frequently executed in a very slovenly manner. Up a great many stone stairs, curly and crooked, you climb till you come to a blunt little passage, at the end of which there is a lofty door. This opens to your cavass, who announces you with some choice flowers of speech; and you enter one of the most

fascinating rooms it has ever been your good fortune to visit. Lofty, low in tone, with a fine sidelight from a window giving on a stone platform, and a soft top-light stealing through the instertices of a delicately-carved dome that springs upward from the centre of a circle which I can only speak of as a masterpiece of *marqueterie*, this lordly chamber is adorned with art objects of the most voluptuous colouring, grouped, arranged, and displayed with consummate taste. Hangings of gorgeous Oriental carpets, inlaid cabinets, feathery palm-branches, divans, quaint stools, inlaid arms, deep-tinted vessels of graceful shapes—all these and many other things of beauty are there, constituting the background and accessories to Makart's pictures, the offspring of his studies and labours in Egypt, which, though they only lasted a couple of months, enabled him to produce seven magnificent works of art, two or three of which were on an unusually large scale.

The streets of Cairo exercised a strange fascination upon me. The greater portion of my leisure time during a three months' sojourn in the Egyptian capital was exclusively spent in wandering aimlessly, without dragoman or guide to turn all the poetry of the place into chattering prose, about those wonderful streets; sometimes in as nearly a straight line as the sinuosities of Oriental domestic architecture would permit, sometimes taking my topographical cue from a particularly sympathetic donkey, in whose humble and pottering little track I steadily followed until his rider pulled up at some dilapidated shop or dingy coffee-shed, where Arabs of all colours between the tint of weak tea and that of a

neglected kitchen kettle were crouched round backgammon boards. So intent were they upon the fluctuations of the game that a grand charge of donkeys hardly availed to arrest their gaze from the rolling of the dice; and the hullabalooo of the street itself, which was vehement enough to attract the attention and ruffle the equanimity of an Egyptian mummy, elicited no more notice from the players than if they had been so many artistically executed waxen figures. No words can do justice to the noise of a Cairo street; it puts private conversation quite out of the question, and reduces the stoutest-voiced European to the adoption of a mute and inglorious pantomime. The Arabs evidently manage to make themselves heard by one another—how they do it is a mystery to me—but, once fairly engaged in the intricacies of the Arabic or Coptic quarter, a Western man might just as well be dumb, for all that he can perform in the way of making himself audible. The noise is an amalgam of the strangest sounds, chiefly human, though such that it is at first difficult to believe that it can be produced from men's throats, even with the assistance of a donkey's strident bray or of the indescribable utterances of an indignant camel. The last-named animal was ever an inexhaustible source of rejoicing to me. The immense joke of his walking about the city as calmly and blandly as if it belonged to him and had been especially arranged as a lounge for camels, never palled upon me for an instant. The humorousness of the camel is infinitely various and not at any time to be withstood, at least by me. He is at once such a dainty and such a slovenly fellow, so tripping of foot and so slobbery of mouth. He is also so

patently a profound and accomplished hypocrite, wearing such a superficial and exaggerated expression of meekness upon his wrinkled countenance, the rare grimaces of which, however, reveal a fully developed capacity for taking care of himself. He receives his burden in a posture of conspicuous humility; but let a single pound of overweight be superimposed upon what he has settled on in his own mind as his correct and sufficient load, and he emerges from his seeming self-abasement in a highly forcible and instructive manner. First he utters a series of dismal screeching protests, successively increasing in volume and vehemence; then, if his remonstrances be disregarded, he wraps himself up in a garment of impenetrable obstinacy, treats all suggestions as to the expediency of getting up with silent contempt, and, when his attention is further solicited by overt acts of violence on the part of his driver, bites with concentrated malignity at the bare legs of that gentleman and of his assistant friends.

I once witnessed, in an inconceivably frowzy street, of a narrowness which rendered the presence of a camel in it at all the most puzzling pleasantry imaginable—for the way was one in which any European cat endowed with the least instinct of self-preservation would certainly object to be swung, for obvious reasons—one of these contests between a ship of the desert and that apparently stranded vessel's guide, philosopher, and friend. The latter had heaped up an armful or so of green meat more than met the former's views, on an already respectable collection of vegetable substance which magnified the naturally excrescent aspect of the

camel's back into the seeming of an animate stack. Crouching, the humpy one had pulled himself close together to "see out" the inconveniences resulting from his determination not to carry away that extra armful or two of greens; and, barring an occasional wag of his whole skin—I cannot describe the phenomenon otherwise—and a cynical writhe of his spongy nose, he might, for all movement on his part, have been chiselled out of stone. Around this impregnable stoic was capering, in a sort of distracted hornpipe, his Arab owner or lessee, in a yellow rage, each successive paroxysm of which expressed itself in a frenzy of double-shuffles. He was also hoisting up parcel after parcel of curses from the remoter depths of his diaphragm with a productiveness in that direction which would have done honour to a skilled disciple of Signor Lamperti's gruesome "method," and punctuating each malediction with a furious thwack on the camel's hard, hard hide, manifestly putting into every thump the whole of whatever heart may have throbbed in his dusky bosom. Meanwhile the sentient drum upon which the infuriate Ishmaelite thus unmercifully beat his devil's tattoo made no sign, till he had received about sixty or seventy blows, except the above-mentioned scornful nose-wrinkling, with which he, as it were, checked off and took tally of the wrongs inflicted upon him. Suddenly his eye, which had followed the Arab steadily through all his insensate gyrations, twinkled. He thought he had his chance. The Arab's legs were an inch or two nearer to his victim's body than they had thitherto been, when out lashed the long neck, and "clash" went the formid-

able jaws! He just missed his tormentor's tibia, in virtue of an enormous skip which the Arab executed simultaneously with the camel's effort; but it was a great joy to observe with what intensified wrath and perfect oneness of purpose he "went for" the most vulnerable point of his persecutor's person. Many more thumps avenged his abortive snap; but he took no more notice of them than if they had been so many flappings of a butterfly's wing. Presently the Arab, fairly tired out, and having presumably exhausted the abusive resources of his native tongue, sat down and spat freely round him for a minute or two, after which he took off the three or four pounds overweight; whereupon the camel rose with the utmost promptitude, and stepped off in that gingerly manner which is so ludicrously out of keeping with the figure and stature of such creatures, steering his way down a street which almost accurately fitted him, as easily as if it had been a broad boulevard. He had had his own way, and he apparently bore no malice; but, had I been that camel's driver, I would not, for some time to come, have adventured my legs within the reach of that oppressively meek countenance. Its expression was too obviously forgiving not to inspire disquietude.

The more I saw of Arab street life and domestic architecture, the more I heard of Arab music, and the more I considered the characteristics and peculiarities of the Arab personages with whom I was brought into contact, the stronger became my conviction that there is something curly in the Arab nature, which finds its expression in all his sayings, doings, and surroundings.

Everything about him is ornate, but in the curved manner; as in his ceiling carvings and mural decorations, so in his music; he never goes straight from one note to another, but reaches—perhaps retches would be the more correct word—at the tone he wants to get at in many several circuitous ways, and finally slides into it round a vocal corner, so to speak. All the wonderful patterns and traceries that we admire in Arabian interiors are made up of irregular intricacies, which constitute a total of amazing beauty, but are in themselves perplexing and unreasonable. Conversation with native gentlemen who have made a conquest of some European idiom—for alas! with respect to the flowery tongue of Egyptian society I am an ignorant Western barbarian—leads me to the conclusion that their inborn or transmitted turn of thought is as elliptic as their musical method and their decorative art. They love to manœuvre round a subject, avoiding its corners, or touching them so lightly as to make no impression upon them at all. They progress colloquially, *when* they progress, exclusively by process of involution. With all this quaintness of form in dealing with actualities, they are extremely clever, cunning of argumentative fence, and apprehensive in the scholastic sense of the word, as well as secretive. Oddly enough, with all this subtlety and quick-wittedness of theirs is combined a certain child-like *naïveté*, which crops out conversationally in the most incongruous manner, and not unfrequently defeats their recondite intellectual combinations with diverting completeness. To obtain their confidence, or even arrive at a knowledge of their real opinions, is no easy undertaking for a Euro-

pean. Directness of question startles them, and, indeed, they are instinctively suspicious of all persons given to asking questions. Perfectly polite, courteous, and even cordial in manner though they are to all foreigners of recognised position, it is almost impossible to become genuinely intimate with them. As for the common people, they are in most respects the most charming and estimable plebeians I have ever become acquainted with. They exhibit a very high-classed civility; they are uniformly cheerful and good-tempered; they are, in a peculiar way of their own, eminently honest; and their social and civic behaviour is quite irreproachable. One's life, limbs, and "portable property" are a good deal safer in the streets of Cairo at night than in those of London, Berlin, or Naples. Nocturnal rows are unknown in Cairo, save when some drunken or quarrelsome European is their author. The Arab servants in all the houses at which I have visited in Cairo and other Egyptian cities, were as unexceptionable in their demeanour as they were deft in their service. Many of them spoke three, and even four, languages fluently and with excellent accent. In my hotels all the chamber service was performed by Arabs, whose pleasant faces and cheery smiles I was never tired of contemplating. At Shepheard's few people think of locking up valuables, or of taking the infinite precautions against dishonesty of the necessity of which sad experience has convinced most travellers in Europe. You may leave your money about day after day in the absolute assurance that not a para will ever be missing. I will not say that Nasr or Hassan, Abdul or Mustapha, may not help himself to a cigarette

out of your case, or a pinch of tobacco out of your tin box; but, in a country where the giving and taking of smokable substances is a matter of course, whatever the differences of social rank may be between the interchangers, a broad interpretation of the rights of property in that particular direction can hardly, even by the strictest moralist, be classed in the category of dishonest actions. What, however, impressed me more than aught else in the outward and visible characteristics of these worthy proletaries was their surpassing and impregnable good nature. The donkey-drivers who swarm round the steps of the chief hotels in Cairo are always playing tricks upon one another, and their play is frequently of the roughest sort, such as would lead to copious bloodshed in Italy or Germany, and to desperate fighting in England or France. They thump one another with good stout sticks, exchanging thwacks that can be heard fifty yards off—it makes one positively sore to hear them. Now, when a person whose costume consists of a calico dressing-gown and a pair of yellow slippers receives on his back and ribs half a dozen blows, any one of which would fell a London rough or a Berliner Raufbold, it might be confidently expected that he would experience some slight irritation, and that his resentment would take the form of a furious attack upon his assailant. Not so, however, with my friends the Arabs. They only laugh, and caper, and wriggle; presently you see operator and victim hand in hand, grinning amicably at one another, or romping like schoolboy friends. Egyptian men, by the way, are much given to walking in couples holding hands, as if life were a chronic set of quadrilles of which they

had selected La Trénise as the only figure worth performing. They live in the streets to an extent and with a frankness of social habits unknown even in Southern Italy. They eat, drink, play at dice, transact business, perform all sorts of functions that are considered private in European countries, squatting on the ground at street corners, under little sheds, before shop doors, on the steps of mosques, round the railed traceries of public fountains—in short, everywhere where they enjoy comparative immunity from the spongy tread of the camel or the pattering hoof of the donkey. Like all peoples who abominate work and revel in constant sunshine, they are picturesque in their practices as well as in their costumes and attitudes. But, above all, what endears them to me and to all the foreigners who live among them and know them well is their kindliness of disposition, their spontaneous and indefeasible amiability—the absence in them of that gall and bitterness which are unfortunately blended with the many fine qualities of Christian populations, the inhabitants of notoriously "civilized" countries.

With a very merry and highly international party of pleasure-seekers, I drove out one fine February morning to Heliopolis, sacred promises of cold fowl and salad, not unmoistened by a pleasant foaming sherbet that is chiefly manufactured in Rheims, having been pronounced *à mon adresse*, and thus actually took part in an excursion outside the tether of my customary walks abroad, thitherto confined to the Isbekieh, Shepheard Street, Bunsen Street, and Stanton Street. It is more than probable that the Arabic names of the last-mentioned

three thoroughfares are widely different from those I have taken the liberty of bestowing upon them; but circumstances over which I have no control prevent me from imparting the correct local designations to my readers. I would try to do so, could I write backwards; but that branch of my education has been lamentably neglected. Politics and finance had their wicked will of me for a long time in Egypt, to the exclusion of all sight-seeing whatsoever. Six weeks elapsed after I fell into the hands of that "Shepheard" (his name is Zech) who does not feed his flock, ere my acquaintance with the Pyramids advanced beyond a photographic footing, and I owed it to the oddest of accidents that I then caught a glimpse of the Nile. One day some English ladies were good enough to insist upon my contemplating the oldest statue in the world, then resident at Boulak. Overcome with gazing upon the bland, not to say cheery lineaments of a gentleman who must have sat for his portrait to a pre-Adamite artist, I sought the fresh air, and happening to prowl through a door of a peculiarly unpromising aspect, found myself on a massive stone balcony overlooking the Father of Rivers. But for the ante-paradisaical statue, I might have quitted Egypt without catching a glimpse of this notorious stream. Similarly, the astute application of gentle force procured me the sight of an historical plant, by all accounts the oldest vegetable of its kind known to science. This is the tree "under which the Holy Family reposed during the flight into Egypt;" so say the guides hereabouts. It does not look its age. In this respect it is disappointing. I have seen older looking trees in Hyde Park. Its branches are studded with

sharp spikes, which suggest the thought that, however agreeable it may have been, some years ago, to rest under its shade, nothing could be more unpleasant at the present moment than to perch amongst its foliage. Considering the number of English and American tourists visiting it annually, it is in a wonderful state of preservation, though uncommonly dusty. Close to it is an old original Egyptian well, exhibiting the process by which bullocks are prepared for the Cairo meat-market, and explaining at a glance much that had thitherto remained a profound mystery to us all with respect to the nature and treatment of the beef supplied to us twice a day at our hotel. The well is surrounded by what I will venture to designate as a pocket-circus, the inner rim of which is a large wooden wheel, to which the bullock is attached by a primitive kind of yoke. Round and round the ring he walks, strictly blindfolded. This exercise is obviously far likelier to make him fat and tender than oil-cake, tranquillity, and other new-fangled nostrums of the modern grazier. When he has spent a dozen or so of years in describing an endless circle, and has reached the desirable degree of juiciness for the table, he is slaughtered and eaten by the intelligent foreigner, upon whom he promptly revenges his protracted wrongs.

Heliopolis sounds like the name of a town, but anything more unlike a town than Heliopolis it would be difficult for the most luxuriant imagination to conceive. I can, indeed, hardly define Heliopolis to my own satisfaction. It might be anything. There is an obelisk, which, like its neighbour the tree, is asserted to be the oldest institution of its class extant. This may be so,

but it is not such a good-looking obelisk as some I have seen in Europe. It is not nearly so neat as the obelisk in the Piazza del Popolo; it wants finish. Obelisks are, as a rule, not exhilarating ornaments; this one I found to be more than usually lowering. A few hundred yards from Heliopolis—if I be correct in identifying that name with the immediate neighbourhood of the obelisk—is a lemon grove, in which thorns predominate quite distinctly over lemons. Sheltered within the scratchy recesses of this grove is a small hostelry kept by Europeans of the Levantine variety, who ten years ago owned a dear little four-year-old girl, babbling prettily in broken French, and a superb ginger cat with a settled purpose in life, which she took no pains to conceal, and which might be summed up in the following words: "Young rabbits in a coop under an old cactus-tree." In front of this queer little inn we found our tables spread with all manner of good things; and as there was fortunately nobody amongst our party who knew anything about Egyptian antiquities or was oppressively well read up in Biblical history, we had what Americans so happily describe as a "real good time." The country between Cairo and Heliopolis bears an extraordinary resemblance to parts of Lombardy—for instance, to the district between Milan and Monza—and the country-houses of the Egyptian princes, liberally distributed over its surface, are all but counterparts of the white straggling flat-roofed *ville* inhabited by the Northern Italian nobility when *in villeggiatura*. The outskirts of Cairo in this direction are full of interest; they abound in ruined tombs, huge castellated buildings in every stage of decay,

Arab dwellings like magnified mole-casts, wayside wells, built on the large and generous scale that distinguishes such structures in the East. The most important element of picturesqueness, dirt, is present in astonishing quantities; indeed, there is more of it than of anything else. One enjoys in Egypt the inestimable advantage, when taking a drive or a walk, of seeing and meeting pretty nearly everything that one least expects to see or meet in a public thoroughfare. The national stock of camels appears to be altogether inexhaustible, and is simply bewildering to a person who has been for many years accustomed to regard camels exclusively from the Zoological Gardens point of view. They carry such odd things, too, and with a bland gravity that disarms criticism. One day I met a camel laden in the following incongruous manner: Firstly, a number of cotton bales hung all over him anyhow; secondly, a hundredweight or so of green meat, packed into the interstices of the pendant, swinging bales; thirdly, a tent full of Bedouin Arabs, chiefly women and children. It may be admitted that about the last spot upon which one would expect to see a tent pitched is a camel's back.

A favourite resort of foreign visitors to Cairo is Helouan, a sanatorium situate on an oasis in the desert about five hours' drive from the capital. Helouan is said to be a very healthy place, but not quite so lively as Tunbridge Wells. It consists of one house. There are no amusements except a hyæna, perpetually retained upon the strength of the establishment, in consideration of his long and valuable services. When entirely out of range he freely allows the sportive stranger to shoot at

him. Baron Henry de Worms used to sit up all night, and every night, with a double gun, for the twin purposes of potting the hyæna and of having an unanswerable excuse for lying in bed all day—quite the pleasantest way of passing one's time at Helouan. The hyæna never put in an appearance but once, when, having privately ascertained that the Baron's gun was not cocked, he sauntered up and howled derisively. By the time the Baron had realised the astonishing circumstance of the hyæna's presence in the flesh, and had taken measures accordingly, the latter was sweetly smiling on the other side of the desert. This is a very wily old animal, universally respected, and there is much sport of the above description to be got out of him. Talking of sport, snipe may be shot any afternoon within half an hour's distance of Cairo itself. The City of the Gate is, as a matter of fact, one of the most enjoyable places in the world during the winter and early spring. I have no words to describe the exquisite beauty and freshness of the nights, when the huge city is hushed, and the only sound that from time to time breaks the dead, cool silence is the long challenge-cry of the Arab watchmen. The dogs are much more civilised than their Constantinopolitan cousins. Those in Shepheard Street make friends with many of the old *habitués* of the English hostelry, and trot home with them at night, even venturing upon the stone terrace, and down into the gardens, where the pelicans and monkeys sleep. But you should see them when a dog from Bunsen Street or the Boulak Road turns up in their own special *quartier !*

CHAPTER X.

THE HOME OF AN ITALIAN ACTOR.—FIVE ITALIAN DOGS.

During a sunny autumn fortnight of the year 1883 I was the guest of Ernesto Rossi, at his country house on the Montughi hill, a short distance from Florence, one of the most picturesquely situated of the countless villas that crown the rounded heights and adorn the undulating slopes of the vine-clad hills surrounding the City of Flowers, and fringing the fruitful plain through which dull Arno winds his way sluggishly along from the foot of the Apennines to the sea.

Between the typical Florentine villa and that of Brixton, or even St. John's Wood, there is little in common save their residential character. In Tuscany, where brilliant sunshine is the rule and a clouded sky the exception, the villas to which, during the sultriness of summer and glow of autumn, wealthy patricians and citizens repair, exhibit a solidity of construction and a lavishness in the matter of space such as the dwellers in the metropolitan suburbs are scarcely accustomed to mentally associate even with the term "mansion"—far less with that of "villa." Many of them—especially the more ancient ones—have walls a couple of feet in thickness, and contain upon each story suites of from

ten to fifteen large and lofty rooms, communicating with one another by folding doors or draped portals, and, for the most part radiating from a nobly-proportioned central hall, ornamented by frescoes and enriched with statuary, flowering shrubs, marble pavements of rich colour and classical design, painted ceilings, and not infrequently, mural decorations in *pietra dura*. From sunrise to sunset, during the summer months, these spacious apartments—for the most part simply but comfortably furnished with massive upholstery in light-coloured woods and low-toned stuffs—are kept in a chronic state of "light that counterfeits a gloom" by heavy green or fawn-coloured jalousies. Behind those solid defences against the fierce heats of a July or August day the windows are closed, and even (during the solstice), inner shutters are carefully adjusted at obtuse angles, so as to admit but a minimum of that dazzling light which, throughout Italy, is regarded as the equivalent of heat. Even at late autumn-tide there are hours in the Tuscan afternoon during which out-of-door exercise is tabooed, except to the *contadino* and the carrier, as a *peine forte et dure* not exempt from peril to health, and assuredly fraught with physical discomfiture to the most robust. The fields are slack-baked, the leaves brittle with dryness; the plots of turf that figure as gardens in an all but grassless country are browned in streaks and patches, as though they had been licked by tongues of fire. With infinite pains and labour the luxuriant shrubs and diminutive flower-beds are sparsely moistened once a day; but there is no water to spare for the scorched lawn and scathed terraces that were meant to be green

velvet, but have been tanned by Sol into the semblance of tawny matting. These severely exercised *giardini* are fringed with cypress-groves and olive-plantations; vineyards and maize-patches struggle up the hillside to their very confines; the russet roofs of the peasants' cottages give here and there relief to the dusky hue of the cypress and livid tint of the olive.

Such is the foreground of the picture I contemplate as I sit at my bedroom window in the *primo piano* of the Villa Rossi, overshadowed by a beetling Tuscan roof. Further off, beyond the stone-encased limits of my host's estate, fertile plains stretch away for many a mile, dotted here and there with brown hamlets, pale yellow villas, and tall square *campanili*. Nothing is absolutely bright in colour save the vines; all the other elements of the landscape are more or less subdued *nuances* of greyish-greens and yellowish-browns, composing together admirably and most reposeful to the eye. The whole panorama is majestically framed by hills—mountains, I might say without exaggeration—of soothingly soft and graceful outline, the nearer ones tawny, save where streaked with vine-rows, the more remote dyed a deep purplish blue by distance. Our own hill—that of Montughi, a popular contraction of Montem Hugonis, the title bestowed upon it five centuries ago by a noble Florentine dame when she made a gift to her son, Count Hugo Villa, of the property now owned by Ernesto Rossi—is but a few hundred feet in height. The Villa Rossi, however, occupies its crest, is overlooked by none of the neighbouring seats, and, from each of its four faces, commands an extensive view of the Arno Valley.

Standing on the platform of its lofty turret, two stories higher than the roof of the *corps de logis*, a magnificent bird's eye view of Florence is commanded due southwards, centred by the dark bulb of the Duomo and the lustrous shaft of Giotto's Campanile. To the eastward, Fiesole is visible, nestling in a broad fold of a green hillside. Northwards, a score of miles distant, lies Pistoja, dwarfed to the size of a toy village, though a populous and influential *chef-lieu*, one of Tuscany's ancient and famous free-towns, returning two members to the Italian Parliament. The westward prospect consists chiefly of Florentine dependencies—such as Sesto, Prato, and Castello, of the rich, broad Arno valley, and of the dusky, cloud-capped Apennines. There is a lifetime's glad gazing in these four pictures, every one of which "jumps to the eye" from some window or other of the house or tower.

In this earthly paradise has Ernesto Rossi, the great Italian actor to whom his country owes its present familiarity with the works of our immortal Shakespeare, fixed his abode. He had been a resident in the city of Florence, where he owns a stately mansion, for more than a quarter of a century, when this estate and residence—thitherto known by the name of the "Villa La Macine"—came into the market and was purchased by him. In the course of ages—its authentic history runs back without break to the thirteenth century of our era—it had been successively owned by the illustrious patrician families of Boni, Tosinghi, Medici, Cardi, and Strozzi, and had been the scene of many a sanguinary episode renowned in Florentine annals. Since the death

of Carlo Strozzi, the potent senator and erudite archæologist, who transferred his magnificent collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman antiquities from his palace in Florence to the "Macine," the villa had passed through the hands of several careless, negligent, or ignorant proprietors, who had allowed its grounds and natural appurtenances to run to waste—its priceless stores of statuary, cinerary urns, and mural tablets to suffer cruel injury, and fall into comparative decay. As soon as it became the property of Rossi he commenced a work of restoration, aided by experienced archæologists and skilful artists, which has only lately been completed at a cost far exceeding the original price of the whole Montughi estate. Two stately halls and an open court paved with marble, their walls and ceilings decorated with classical designs in distemper, are devoted to the famous Strozzi Collection, which consists of Etruscan urns and sarcophagi, for the most part elaborately carved in high relief, of Greek statues and Roman busts, these latter nearly all in admirable preservation, and of mural and votive tablets, which have been let into the walls of the above-mentioned apartments in so highly finished a manner that they appear to be integral elements of the mural decoration. The "Museo" contains 312 objects, the most modern of which dates from the time of the Cæsars. Amongst the inscriptions are two of surpassing interest to the profession of which Ernesto Rossi is a leader. One is dedicated to Pristina Maximina, Actrix —the *premier sujet* of her day "in the house of Cæsar;" the other to Roscius, the Garrick of Imperial Rome. Several of the Greek sculptures are exquisitely beau-

tiful. Of the Roman busts the most striking is a highly characteristic portrait of Nero, wrought by a courageous hand that scorned to flatter the pitiless tyrant. A volume's space would not suffice me to describe the contents of the Museo Strozzi, which brings to its gifted owner visitors of the professional variety of humanity from all parts of Europe, and furnishes abundant occupation to a learned archæologist, Signor Mazzei, who holds the position of secretary and curator in Rossi's household. Besides, is not the history of the collection, written in flowing Latin, recorded in the huge parchment-bound tomes, dealing exhaustively with the antiquities of Florence, and bearing the revered signature of the "præclarissimus et doctissimus Ant. Franc. Gari, presbyter Flor. Baptisterii"—a work of great weight, in every sense of the word—at which I have glanced with awe from a respectful distance? One fact of general interest in connection with the Museo Strozzi I may, however, mention. From an artistic point of view, its *capo d'opera* is a Faun, bearing Bacchus on his shoulder, attributed to Phidias—in very truth, a master-work of force, grace, and beauty. It appears that four marble versions of this powerful group, discovered at different epochs, exist in Europe: one at the Vatican, another at the Museo Borbonico, a third in the Villa Albani, and the fourth in the Villa Rossi, *detta* La Macine, in Montughi. Obviously, three of the four must be *repliche*. Whilst I was staying at the Villa, Professor Gamurrini, the Royal Commissary of Antiquities for Tuscany, paid a visit to Ernesto Rossi for the express purpose of inspecting the collection. After subjecting the Bacchus-

bearing Faun to a long and minute examination, he declared it to be, beyond a doubt, the original work of the inimitable Greek sculptor, from which the three groups above alluded to had been reproduced, in all probability by eminent pupils of Phidias. The Professor, moreover, expressed his conviction that, in conception and execution alike, the group in question is entitled to rank amongst the noblest examples of Greek art known to civilised humanity.

Everyday life at the Villa Rossi, as I lived it during my visit, was an ideal holiday, made up of perfect peace, absolute personal freedom, artistic surroundings, genial and sympathetic society, and all the most refined as well as luxurious attributes of physical comfort, too frequently lacking in the palaces of the wealthiest Italian nobles. Ernesto Rossi, in the course of his professional career (which commenced in the year 1849) has sojourned in many lands; and nothing in the way of modern improvements—as far as the conveniences of domestic existence are concerned—appears to have escaped his observant eye. In his villa all the ingenious appliances that contribute so materially to human happiness within the precincts of a home are adapted to a dwelling of antique exterior aspect and interior arrangement, and this with such excellent taste as to avoid the least suggestion of anachronism, or even inharmonious contrast. Every room in the house is fitted with electric bells, one set communicating with the offices for day use, the other with the "servants gallery" in case of need during the hours of night. The bath-rooms and baths are executed in massive white marble, with brass accessories copied

from classical models. Along the front façade sweeps a noble cream-coloured stone terrace, twenty feet broad, fringed with flowering shrubs, and lit up, after dark, by brilliant lamps, set upon tall slender metal shafts. The greater part of the villa's right wing consists of a vast square *patio*, *intra muros*, one side of which is open to the summer dining-hall, whilst the three others are profusely ornamented with mural tablets and votive inscriptions. When the sun shines on this *patio*, the dining-hall is kept dusk and cool by a huge veil of yellow and russet drapery, some thirty feet in breadth by eighteen in length. The centre of the court is occupied by an ancient stone fountain rising from a bed of flowers and ferns; its corners are filled up by graduated banks of oleanders, tube-roses, camellias, and plants with wax-like blossoms, red as well as white, the English names of which are unknown to me. At the back of the summer banqueting-hall, in which a hundred guests can be comfortably entertained at table, is the large winter dining-room, behind which is situated one still smaller —about twenty by sixteen—for family use in exceptionally cold weather. This apartment, like all the drawing-rooms, studies, boudoirs, and bedrooms, is warmed by hot air, generated by a huge central furnace lodged in the heart of the spacious vaults, excavated in the living rock, upon which the whole superstructure of the villa reposes. In a corner of the left wing is a cosy little chapel, dedicated to "La Santissima Croce," with sacristy, organ, and confessional, all complete, not to mention wall-painting of saints and martyrs, gorgeous vestments, and consecrated vessels in the precious metals.

Besides the splendid stone stables, coach-houses, harness-rooms, &c., adjoining the villa, on a tufa terrace some six feet lower than the *corps de-logis*, Rossi has built a second set of massive quarters for his horses, hard by a smaller villa that stands upon his property, some three hundred yards from La Macine, and is inhabited by his *fattore*, or bailiff, though in days gone by it lodged no less exalted a personage than the Grand Duke of Tuscany. The drive between the two residences runs through vineyards and cypress groves, interspersed here and there by double rows of olive and pear-trees.

Early rising is the rule at the Villa Rossi; but the family and visitors do not, as a rule, meet until eleven o'clock, when the second breakfast—a plentiful knife-and-fork meal, consisting of four courses and dessert—is served in the large banqueting-hall. At eight a.m. coffee, toast, and butter are set out upon a table in each bedroom. The succeeding three hours are spent in the bath and dressing-rooms, in reading, writing, or resting (if the mosquitoes have been more than usually malignant during the night), or—for the male guests—in smoking and *causerie* with their accomplished host in his *sanctum sanctorum*, a snug library overlooking the *patio*. During my sojourn at La Macine, Rossi was engaged, with all the ardour that is one of his most sympathetic characteristics, in preparing a new Italian version of Julius Cæsar—not before it was wanted, the translations hitherto current in this country being one and all imperfect achievements, more or less disfigured by inaccuracies and misapprehensions. For some years past the great Italian tragedian has industriously addressed himself to the study of our language, with

the exclusive purpose of supplying what, in his deep and enthusiastic Shakespeare-worship, he regards as a national want on the part of Italy; and his labours have resulted in a literary proficiency in the English tongue that enables him to seize Shakespeare's subtlest meanings and give them adequate interpretation in his own euphonious idiom. His first essay in this direction has been Julius Cæsar—for obvious reasons a favourite play with the Italian public—of which he completed a highly remarkable rendering in blank verse during my stay with him. For absolute fidelity to the text it is unsurpassed, even by the German versions, which have heretofore been universally recognised as triumphs of conscientious and painstaking exactitude; while Rossi's poetical nature, cultivated intellect, and intense appreciation of Shakespeare's genius have imparted to his verses—especially in the more heroic episodes of the tragedy—a lofty austereness of style and nobility of diction that are extraordinarily impressive. Every morning, after luxurious ablution in a bath worthy of "the noblest Roman of them all," he corrects, re-writes, or recasts, his lines from about nine to eleven. Then comes the forenoon *colazione*, during which he is the life and soul of the company, overflowing with anecdote, humour, and the gentle gaiety that runs so smoothly through the table-talk of Italian society. Coffee, the post-prandial cigar, a quaint game with leaden discs and a wooden frame as full of holes as a rabbit-warren, a stroll through the vineyards, during which he generally looks in at his contadini's cottages to see how the world is using their children (who all appear to worship the very ground the *padrone* treads upon), and a conference with his bailiff

upon matters connected with the estate, bring him to four o'clock, when he resumes his Shakesperian labour of love for two hours or so more. At half-past six the great bell in the tower rings out the dinner signal, and Ernesto Rossi closes his books (every imaginable edition of Shakespeare environs him in his study) until the following morning.

The *cena*, or evening meal, is in every respect an interesting event. Choice spirits gather nightly round Rossi's board, for Florence is within easy reach *per legno* or even on foot, and the hospitality of La Macine knows no limit; our amphitrion's cook is a *cordon bleu*, learned in all the honoured traditions of Tuscan cookery, and gifted, moreover, with a happy and fertile culinary imagination; the fruit, wine, bread, oil, poultry, and sausage (the last in boundless variety of toothsome combinations), are all grown or manufactured on the estate, and of admirable quality. Rossi's wine in particular, which belongs to the finest class of Chianti, is a superb beverage, entirely free from the acidity and slightly metallic twang that characterise the majority of Italian red wines, and mar their full enjoyment by those not to the manner born. It is light and slightly astringent—of the category that "cheers and not inebriates"—refreshing, thirst-allaying, agreeably stimulating, and perfectly wholesome. The bulbous green Tuscan fig, combined with *salame*, daily plays the part of *antipasto* —the Italian equivalent of the Russian zakouska and German imbiss—at these copious but elegant banquets. It is followed by a *minestra* (this term comprehends all sorts of soups and macaroni, risotti, polente, &c., in

nuances without number), a dish of fish or *frittura* (another comprehensive term upon which I dare not attempt to dilate), two rich and ingenious *entrées*—say *stuffatino* and *polpette*—a *rôti* with salad, a service of cooked vegetables accompanied by some succulent sauce, a *piatto dolce*, or sweet, and dessert, winding up with black coffee and a *chasse* of liqueur. Such is Ernesto Rossi's evening "ordinary;" on great guest-days a second fish and supplementary roast, champagne, ices, and *sorbetti* are added to the *ménu*. After dinner, those "make music" who can, others play piquet, ecarté, draughts, chess, or *sette e mezzo*, a feeble sort of Van John, or sit on the great flagged terrace, chatting *de quibusdam aliis*, and drinking in the beauty of the moon-lit landscape with ever-augmenting enjoyment. The Tuscans, gentry and peasantry alike, are inveterate draught-players, so much so, that, as far as my experience has gone, nobody ever seems to win a game, contest after contest resulting in a "draw." Their cries and gestures whilst engaged in this fascinating recreation are, to say the least of them, vigorous. Bloodshed appears inevitable at every move; from time to time it seems imperative that each adversary shall wallow in the other's gore, having, as a mild preliminary to that refreshment, torn out his vitals and trampled them under foot. Nothing, however, could be more fictive than all the red-hot rage and furious shouting which accompanies every sort of social encounter in this part of Italy. The game being won or drawn, the political question argued out, or the difference of opinion adjusted, you will see the opponents, who but a minute previously exhibited

the mien of exasperated tigers, smooth their brows and wreath their lips with smiles, as though by enchantment —exchange a cordial hand-pressure, in expression of their mutual gratitude for having aided one another to pass a few minutes so pleasantly, and finally walk away arm-in-arm, the best friends in the world.

During my sojourn on the Montughi hill I paid more than one visit to Ernesto Rossi's town-house in the Piazza dell' Indipendenza, upon the internal decoration of which he has laid out sums that represent a handsome fortune, even from an English or American point of view. At least a dozen of the reception-rooms in this stately mansion are—as far as their walls and ceilings are concerned—the work of Bellandi and Panti, two of Florence's leading contemporary painters, the allegorical groups and symbolical figures having been executed by the former, the decorative details by the latter painter. The whole set of apartments is a vast repository of the art-treasures presented to and accumulated by Rossi in the course of his long theatrical career. Bronzes, *faïënces*, tapestry, porcelain, mosaics, marqueterie, Persian carpets, *émaux cloisonnés*, Toula and Moscow masterpieces of gold and silver work, precious *bric-à-brac* of every variety, are tastefully disposed throughout the entire suite of *salons* and boudoirs; but the most interesting room of all is a small chamber, about twelve feet square, the last of the set, with but one door for entrance and issue—a sort of shrine, the patron saint of which, or, rather, the *genus loci*, is Ernesto Rossi himself. In this, his personal "museo," are displayed, under glass, in massive ebony and golden cases, the wreaths, addresses,

medals, albums, weapons, jewels and countless other priceless objects conferred upon him by monarchs, municipalities, universities, literary associations, and art clubs, in all parts of Europe, and many of Asia, Africa, and America. It is a collection of honours and homages paid to an incorporation of dramatic art, such as I believe to be without precedent or parallel in the annals of the stage. Where is the second living actor upon whom fourteen Imperial and Royal Orders of Chivalry have been conferred, several of them in the higher grades reserved for those who have rendered the State momentous service? Ernesto Rossi has been laden with honours by his own Sovereign, as well as by the princes of other lands. He is a Knight-Commander of both the principal Italian orders, a coincidence of distinctions rare enough in the Ausonian Peninsula; Russia, France, Brazil, Portugal, Sweden, and Denmark, have all bestowed upon him the insignia of their leading chivalric decorations. One of the cases above alluded to is entirely filled with gold medals and *plaques*, the latter bearing inscriptions especially referring to his talents and achievements. Amongst the gorgeous addresses framed and hung round the room, I was glad to see one from nearly a hundred British actors to their "brother in Art," Ernesto Rossi. The first three signatures are those of Benjamin Webster, Henry Irving, and Samuel Phelps; Thomas Thorne and David James head the second column of autographs; a little lower down come "handsome Jack Barnes," and "Jemmy" Fernandez; and the roll of fame is closed by the dashing *paraphe* of Charles Warner. Not far from this interesting souvenir

of Rossi's first visit to London is a velvet shrine, containing an entire porcelain service, made expressly for its owner by order of the German Crown Prince, who presented it to him. It represents all the important public buildings and monuments of Berlin, and as an artistic chef-d'œuvre is simply inestimable. Hard by stand the noble embossed and chiselled centrepiece that Kaiser Wilhelm sent some short time ago to Rossi, "as a slight testimony of admiration and regard," and the priceless cup bestowed by Alexander II. upon "son grand et cher artiste," and the rare Sèvres vase, gift of the Italian Ministry; and the uncut ruby, as large as a bantam egg, offered as "debole ommaggio al grandissimo genio," by the Duke della Galliera; and the splendid dirks, yataghans, stiletti, golden and jewelled collars, stars, &c., worn by Rossi in Macbeth, Othello, Hamlet, Lear, Richard III., and other Shakespearean parts—all these *pretiosa* being presents to him from kings, princes, and other august personages. In another case are some dozens of albums, containing original sketches, sonnets, and dedicatory verses by the leading painters and poets of France and Italy.

In the course of the autumn holiday above referred to, I made the acquaintance of several interesting persons, four-legged as well as two-legged, the most remarkable of whom unquestionably belonged to the former category. They were dogs—five Italian dogs. Although I spent little more than a fortnight in their company, I contrived within that brief period to overcome their inborn prejudices against a foreign biped, and even, by the exercise of considerable patience and

tact, to acquire their friendship, more or less cordially displayed in exact proportion to the respective sternness or amenity of their dispositions. Being constitutionally addicted to the society of dogs—animals surprisingly quick at recognising those who wish them well, and rarely unrequiteful of sincere good will—and having for many a year past been honoured with the esteem and confidence of several eminent members of the canine community, I soon succeeded in convincing these Italian quadrupeds that, although not their compatriot by birth, I was the sort of person whom an honest and self-respecting dog might fearlessly tolerate, and even, to a certain extent, rely upon. From relations of mere courtesy to those of genial intimacy the transition—except in one case—was a rapid and complete one. I believe myself to be justified in asserting that four of those five dogs made up their minds, some days before I took an affectionate leave of them, to regard me as a firm and faithful friend, to whom their material interests and recreations were matters worthy of serious consideration and steadfast attention.

Such varieties of temperament, contrasts of character, and diversity of habits I have never before encountered in five individualities, canine or human. Light and darkness are not more dissimilar than any one of these dogs is to any other. They are the property of Ernesto Rossi, and reside in or about his beautiful villa at Montughi, on the hill of that name, about two miles from the Porta San Gallo. Their names are Flossy, Rio, Bozzolino, Perso, and Lupar. That is the order in which they rank amongst the members of the Rossi

family. Nobody who knows anything about the characteristics of pet dogs and the qualities that especially endear them to their owners, will be surprised to learn that the most influential and beloved of these animals is also the smallest in size and the most ferocious in temper. Born to rule, intolerant of restraint, exclusively devoted to the protection and furthering of his own interests, Flossy deserves a paragraph to himself. A psychological analysis of this distinguished despot, carefully drawn up, would fill a chapter.

In commenting upon the character of the venerable Countess of Kew, Thackeray remarked that one of the most invaluable gifts that Nature can bestow upon anybody is "a fine furious temper." Of the correctness of that assertion my respected friend Flossy is a shining illustration and conclusive proof. From early puppyhood to advanced senility—he is at present fifteen years old—he has bitten and snarled his way through life with a persevering and indomitable savageness that has secured to him the servile deference and implicit obedience of all who have been brought into contact with him. He may be not inaptly described as a choice assortment of first-class vices and evil passions neatly packed up in a small, fluffy, and highly decorative skin of creamy-white hue. A native of South America, in which country he had been just weaned when he was presented to Rossi's only daughter, Evelina, he is an exceptionally handsome sample of a cross between the Skye and Maltese breeds of long-eared terriers. At a time when his infant gums were still toothless, he made a spirited attempt, accompanied by growls of unmistak-

able spitefulness, to bite his young mistress, and has ever since persevered in that attitude, not only towards herself, but towards mankind at large. He is an irreconcileable, an "intransigeant" of the deepest dye—an anthropophagist by conviction, and an inveterate hater of his own kind to boot. Above all, he is the very incarnation of ingratitude. I have seen him repeatedly attempt to bite the kind hand engaged in supplying him with his favourite dainty—a cloying preparation of coffee residue and pounded loaf sugar. One of his most alarming habits is to all but choke himself by endeavouring to swallow and growl simultaneously, his anxiety to defy the person who has just bestowed upon him some tit-bit being so overpowering that he cannot wait to dispose of the morsel before giving vent to his angry feelings. I never dreamt that any creature —short of a freshly-caught Bengal tiger—could be so continuously irascible. As a French friend of the Rossis aptly said of him one evening: "Il est rageur à ne pas y croire, ce petit grédin!" To touch him, ever so lightly and caressingly, is to elicit an explosion of choler that would do honour to a gouty admiral, whose chalkstones had been unexpectedly administered to with a paviour's rammer. I studied Flossy's character closely and with absorbing interest, and utterly failed to discover any redeeming quality in him. My friends told me that he treated me with marked and unusual partiality. If that was so, he certainly demonstrated his regard in an odd way; for I must do him the justice to say that he bit me "wherever found." To my apprehension, however, he treated everybody alike in this

respect; I could detect no shade of preference in his manner of snapping at my hands whenever he got half a chance to lay hold of them. And yet Flossy is beloved by those about him; nay, more, he rules the Rossi household with practically undisputed sway. No crowned head is attended to more obsequiously than he. It is impossible to ignore him when he wants, or fancies he wants, anything, for until he gets it he accompanies conversation with an inexhaustible succession of crisp barks, produced at intervals of from ten to twelve seconds. Sometimes this performance elicits a mild remonstrance of "Buono, Flossy!" or a gentle rebuke of "Nojoso, nojoso!" from the lady of the house. Sometimes, when distraction is painted on the faces of all the guests assembled round his table, Rossi performs an often-rehearsed little domestic comedy, consisting in summoning a particular man-servant (the mere enunciation of whose name convulses the little dog with spasms of ire), and commanding him to remove the offender. "Emilio, piglia Flossy e portalo via!" is the formula adhered to on such occasions. Its immediate result is a deafening outburst of indignant protest on the part of Flossy, upon which Rossi is wont to remark, with a benignant smile, "Is it not amazing how intelligent that dog is? You see, he understands all that I say about him, come un vero Cristiano!" It is probably the indomitable spirit and valour displayed by so small an animal that have secured impunity to his manifold offences. Some years ago, another dog (of whom I shall have something to say presently), exasperated beyond bounds by Flossy's reckless provocations, snapped at

him viciously, and tore his left eye out of its socket. So painful an accident—it brought him to death's door—would have quelled the pugnacity of most dogs, at least for a while. It did not produce that effect upon Flossy. The lady who nursed him night and day through his danger has assured me that he growled at her when apparently *in extremis*, and bit the surgeon several times. I can personally testify to the unabated insolence of his demeanour towards the very dog from whom he had received a correction that well-nigh proved fatal to him.

That dog is Rio, a black and white Newfoundland of extraordinary size and strength; frank, impulsive, and masterful; an embarrassing combination of genial good-nature and ungovernable jealousy. In his manners and utterances he is more ursine than canine. When Dame Nature laid down his lines, she had a bear in her mind; but, probably through some technical error, her handiwork turned out a dog. Rio does not live at Montughi, but at Rossi's Florentine palace, whence, every evening, he is brought "on the chain" to visit his master and mistress by a domestic specially affected to his service—a mild, obsequious Tuscan, who ministers to Rio's necessities with mingled terror and pride. He is supposed to lead Rio; as a matter of fact Rio leads him, or rather drags him along at a laborious trot, varied by involuntary bounds. As the hour draws nigh at which Rio's nightly visit takes place, an uneasiness of deportment and tendency towards self-effacement make themselves manifest in the other Montughi dogs—Flossy always excepted, who would not budge from his post of 'vantage

on Signora Rossi's chair were a seven-headed fiery dragon to enter the dining-room. Bozzolino and Perso, however, mysteriously vanish, and Lupar retires to honourable obscurity in the stables. On arriving, Rio takes a preliminary canter through all the reception-rooms and servants' offices, with a view to ascertaining whether or not any other dog be lurking about on the premises. Having completed this tour of inspection, during which he is distinctly audible to the naked ear, he gallops into the salle-à-manger, and pays his respects to his master and mistress. It is during this ceremony that his utterances, intended to express the loyalty and devotion with which his heart is teeming, exactly resemble those of an infuriate bear. When we first met he favoured me with a few remarks, purporting—as I was subsequently informed—that he was glad to see me, and hoped we should get on together. I thought my last hour was come, and stiffened my sinews for a death-struggle. We subsequently became excellent friends. I propitiated him with fowl-bones, and ultimately won his affection by gratifying his taste for chunks of bread-crust steeped in gravy. In acknowledgment of these attentions he would roll on his back at my feet for five minutes at a stretch, growling all the while like Atta Troll. That is Rio's way of apprising his particular friends that he is a grateful and contented dog. But when the jealous fit is upon him—not infrequently, by any means—the latent truculence of his nature breaks out, and he becomes uncontrollable, save by one—a lady to whom dogs and men alike submit, rejoicing in their subjugation. I mean the Signora Padrona, my esteemed

friend Evelina Rossi, who, with a word and glance, can always bring the fierce Newfoundland to his bearings, and change, as though by enchantment, the red glare of his angry eye into a fond and loving look.

Bozzolino is a comic dog, of no recognised breed. His appearance is that of a fat fox with a curly brush and short legs. Under a mask of buffoonery he conceals great strength of will and remarkable reasoning powers. Seemingly volatile and eccentric, he is really a shrewd and painstaking student of human character. Frivolity with him is a means to the end; for experience has taught him that dog-lovers regard it as covering a multitude of sins. Bozzolino knows that a frivolous dog, being held irresponsible for his actions, can generally have his own way. He has, therefore, assiduously addressed himself to earning a reputation for light-hearted eccentricity, and with triumphant success. For instance, it is not his humour to sleep or breakfast at the villa, but at the house of one of Rossi's contadini, about half-way down the avenue of cedars and olive-trees that leads from La Macine to the high road. Though he is the signora's own personal dog—her body-dog, from a German point of view—she puts up with his residential "vagaries" on the ground that "Bozzolino is so frivolous." As, after I had known him for a day or two, Bozzolino's frivolity struck me as studied rather than spontaneous, and somewhat more obtrusively put forward than was consistent with the inborn carelessness of character attributed to him; as, moreover, upon several occasions (when he did not know I was watching him) I had detected an expression of consummate slyness

in his lively hazel eye, I resolved to try whether close observation of his habits might not enable me to divine his motive for dividing his time between luxury at the villa—a very dog's paradise—and frugality at the cottage. That he was a surpassingly greedy dog I knew; his appetite and capacity of stowage, considered in relation to his size, had already astounded me: and it was his greediness that furnished the clue, by following up which I succeeded eventually in plucking out the heart of Bozzolino's mystery. As I have already stated, he never passed the night at La Macine. After dinner every evening, when cards or music had set in, Bozzolino disappeared, and we saw no more of him until the following afternoon, when, it being the signora's daily custom to drive into Florence at about two p.m., he was found awaiting her by the cottage of his choice, whence he escorted her vociferously to the great iron gates of the domain, beyond which he declined to follow the carriage. When she returned, however, no matter at what hour, Bozzolino was "in waiting" at the contadino's door, with demonstrations of exaggerated rapture, to accompany her home. Presently the dinner-bell rang, and Bozzolino took up a strategic position to the left of the signora's chair. From that moment till the end of the repast his gaze was riveted upon her face, never relaxing its pitiful importunity for a second, even after it had been responded to by food enough for two dogs of his calibre. His every lineament, so to speak, inferred privation of an altogether unbearable stringency; his attitude and expression were ineffably pathetic. A finer piece of acting in dumb-show I never witnessed, nor did

it ever fail to produce the desired effect. "How hungry poor Bozzolino looks!" the signora would say, when this ingenious pantomime had lasted a few minutes; "I am sure those Martellis starve him;" and a third plateful of succulent scraps would be set before Bozzolino, to be cleared of its contents with incredible swiftness. This supplement, this gross superfluity of nourishment, was the sole aim and end of all his assumed frivolity and eccentricity of habits. Had he taken his morning meal at home, like the other dogs, his evening pretence of starvation must have been promptly detected, and disgrace could hardly have failed to follow exposure. His periodical visits to the Martellis, however, served his purpose perfectly, by exposing those worthy peasants to the imputation of keeping him on short commons, and thus justifying his mute claim to an extra helping. A dog who could mature and carry out to its most delicate detail so subtle and elaborate a plan as the above, is a loss to Italian diplomacy. His name should be Machiavelli, not Bozzolino.

Perso's connection with the Rossi family originated, as his name indicates, in his being a lost dog. This waif is yellow, long, and wiry, suggesting a Yorkshire tyke which has made lifelong but ineffectual efforts to become a deerhound. His owners know him to be an unusually confused mongrel; but, in describing him to inquisitive foreigners, they keep up a kindly fiction to the effect that he represents a rare and curious variety of Apennine sheep-dog. I have observed that they only utter this myth in his presence; from which fact I infer that it was invented with a view to raising him in his own esti-

mation, or at least to sparing him the humiliation of being referred to as a nondescript. Appearances are certainly against Perso; they could not well be more so; but the proverb says they are deceitful, and in his case the proverb is right. A gentler, humbler, more forgiving, affectionate creature never drew breath. He is a very worm for meekness and diffidence. His spirits must have been suddenly knocked down, probably in early life, by some tremendous domestic calamity, and he has never been able to pick them up. When other dogs bite him he only howls, and creeps away sorrowfully to lick his wounds in private. His attitude towards society at large is a recumbent and inverted one; called or spoken to, even in the friendliest tone, he falls down prostrate, turns limply over upon his back, and folds up his four paws, expectant of the worst, but deprecating excessive violence. "Kick me," he seems to say; "you have a right to do so. Heaven forefend that I should question that right, or resent its exercise. But, if one so abject may venture to offer a suggestion, do not utterly pulverise me. Leave me life enough to permit of my licking your hand, and humbly thanking you for a well-merited correction." He is afraid of everything; I might say of nothing, for I have seen him start and shiver at his own shadow; but, above all else, of Rio, who one day, in a paroxysm of jealousy, took a mouthful out of his head. When Perso hears his enemy's bark, far away down the avenue, he begins to tremble in every limb, as though smitten with palsy; he disposes of his tail and ears in such sort that they all but vanish from sight, and glides away in a spectral manner to the nearest

hiding-place. If discovered by the Newfoundland, who sometimes takes especial pains to hunt him up, he grovels before that overbearing tyrant, gasping with affright, and whimpering for mercy. As a rule Rio, contented with having demonstrated his mastery over the only other large dog in the establishment, sniffs at him contemptuously, utters a monitory growl or two, and turns away with his nose in the air, as from something too despicably low to merit further attention. After an interview of this class, hours elapse before Perso's nerves recover from the shock they have sustained. He retires to a corner, coils himself up tight, and shakes. Perso, however, must have his moments of expansiveness, and cannot be insensible to the passion of love; for having noticed upon different occasions, whilst driving about the neighbourhood of Montughi, several melancholy mongrels bearing more or less resemblance to my abashed friend at La Macine, I ventured to inquire whether these, too, were Apennine dogs of any peculiar breed, and received the answer: "Sono figli di Perso." I could not have credited him with the courage to woo; but, with respect to the number of his offspring, it appears that he is quite a patriarch. Possibly he finds consolation in family joys for the wrongs of his blighted youth and for the general deconsideration brought upon him by his pusillanimity. No dog to whose name the adjective "poor" is invariably prefixed when he is addressed, or even casually mentioned, can enjoy the proud moral voluptuousness of self-respect in connection with his social relations; but it may be that he is looked up to by his own wives and children, and I have reason

to believe that Perso assumes an air of mild authority in his domestic circles. Unseen myself, I have more than once seen him playfully rebuke one of his consorts—Lupar, the last of the five Italian dogs inadequately dealt with in this hasty sketch—by biting her ears. He is, moreover, somewhat peremptory with his fleas. This trait, and his conspicuous expertness as a fly-catcher, incline me to the opinion that Perso has some latent energy about him, and will some day astonish his friends by taking his own part; perhaps, even, by growling.

Of Lupar, Perso's khanoum or chief wife, I wish to speak with such moderation as may be compatible with my painful remembrance of the harassing personal inconvenience and annoyance inflicted upon me by that execrable animal during my sojourn at La Macine. She is, perhaps, not so much a dog as a highly ingenious and efficient self-winding-up engine for the production of barks. Not admitted to the interior of the villa—I could never lure her even to cross its threshold—she is supposed to reside in a kennel specially affected to her use upon a broad stone terrace fronting the house. It is her official function, however, to keep watch over Rossi's property; consequently, she persistently abstains from availing herself of the accommodation provided for her, and lopes up and down the aforesaid terrace from dewy eve to sparkling morn, discharging several hundred thousand powerful barks during the hours usually devoted to slumber. As far as she and the miscreants she is supposed to frighten away are concerned, nothing ever comes of this dreadful practice. Rossi's vines are plundered with impressive regularity by nocturnal amateurs of the grape, who carry off their booty unmolested, and,

I dare say smiling. But the effect of Lupar on temporary residents at La Macine is disastrous, maddening, and—by reason of the language it provokes—eminently prejudicial to their salvation. A good many dogs inhabit the Arno valley, and pass their nights al fresco. Lupar renders them incessantly and hideously vocal for many a mile. They would be as silent as oysters but for her. Whenever bronchial fatigue compels her to pause for a few seconds their yelping at once dies out, and peace reigns over Tuscany. As soon as she has recovered breath, however, she starts them off again with a fresh solo, and they take up their choral parts as vivaciously as though murdering sleep were an honourable and lucrative profession. Then Tuscany, or at least the stranger within its gates, becomes wakeful again, and impairs its physical prospects by a desperate endeavour to exhaust the Italian vocabulary of expletives. Lupar is the head and front of all this offending, and her moral responsibilities must, by this time, be something tremendous, for, as I am credibly informed, she has shattered the rest of an entire commune every night, and all night long, throughout two long years. If maledictions could have consumed her during my experiences of her iterative capacities, there would not have been an ash of her left on the second morning after my arrival at Montughi. Fortunately for her, "words are but breath, and breath a vapour is." I parted from her without sorrow, however, and fondly hope I may never hear her bark again. She is the only one of the five Italian dogs I met at Ernesto Rossi's country house whose idiosyncrasies caused me unmitigated distress, and still rankle in my memory.

CHAPTER XI.

ENGLISHMEN ABROAD.—FOREIGN COOKERY AND BRITISH REQUIREMENTS.—UNFREQUENTED CONTINENTAL NOOKS.—SPAS AND "WATER-PLAYS."—A DULL CAPITAL.

During my long sojourn on the Continent of Europe, countless experiences gathered amongst such of my fellow-countrymen as were, like myself, voluntary exiles from the land of their birth, led me to conclude that Britons who live abroad are, as a rule, never weary of inveighing against the local customs and arrangements that compel them to revolutionise their domestic habits. With the things they can get, as well as with the manner of getting them and of dealing with them when they are gotten, they are supremely dissatisfied. The things they cannot get become invested to their apprehension with a charm that was altogether wanting when such articles were easily and cheaply procurable. In their secret souls they glorify these things, and insensibly fall into a habit of identifying them with English institutions, also lacking to them during their term of foreign sojourn. Thus the concrete and the abstract become ranged in the same category of grievances, which will be found in the minds of Englishmen resident upon the Continent to include comestibles and principles of go-

vernment, cooking and political economy. Chops and Constitutionalism, bloaters and the Bill of Rights, Finnan haddocks and Habeas Corpus, lamb's fry and liberty of the subject, fish sauce and freedom of the press, get mixed up in the heterogeneous catalogue of things which the self-exiled Briton finds he has to do without, and over which he ponders resentfully, despising the benighted "foreigners," who not only manage to exist without them, but aggravate his chronic irritation by failing to evince any urgent want of them.

It is, for instance, a mystery to him, opening out a wide field of ill-tempered conjecture, that the mutton-chop, that juicy and toothsome staple of British nourishment, should be an unknown viand throughout Continental Europe, save and except in one or two capital cities largely colonised by his countrymen, such as Paris and Brussels. If he inhabit Germany or Italy it is a source of offence to him that tradesmen cannot be induced to call at his house for orders, or fall in with his insular system of little red-covered books fraught with illegible entries, or sell him anything at a fixed price without going through the ceremonial of a bargain, or take his cheque for the amount of their weekly or monthly bills, if he can succeed in persuading a foreign banker to give him a cheque-book. With bitterness at his heart he sees himself coerced into committing plenary powers of selection and purchase to his cook, who fritters away half of the time which is his property in trudging about from one market-place to another, and whose arithmetical acquirements, the outcome of compulsory national education, enable her to fleece him with an adroitness that

defies detection. Tea, his morning and evening solace in his native land, costs from five to fifteen shillings a pound, and in the infusion it yields with that seeming reluctance which never fails to perplex the Englishman abroad, he strives in vain to recognise the familiar flavour of the beverage cherished in his memory as a good English cup of tea. The artificer who devised his kitchen range knew nothing of toast, and therefore made no provision for the possible confection of that crisp and appetizing substance. British stout and pale ale can be purchased in well-nigh every Continental town of more than five thousand inhabitants, but for the most part at a price which is practically prohibitive to the English resident abroad, as well as to the native with a moderate competence, who ranks our potent malt liquor among the luxuries in which he may only excuse himself for indulging upon occasions when reckless expenditure supersedes prudent thrift, such as a family anniversary, or the day upon which his lottery ticket is drawn a prize. Belgium is our near neighbour and good friend, well acquainted with the merits of our beer, and consuming it in considerable quantity: yet there are hotels in Brussels where three shillings and fourpence are charged for a quart-bottle of stout, nearly its price at St. Petersburg or Bucharest, and more than double its retail value in Pekin, whither it has to be carried from the waterside in baskets by Chinese coolies. Sherry, dry, bitter, and somewhat medicinal, such as his palate loveth, the Briton abroad must also forego, even in the country of its growth. Money will not buy it in any French, Belgian, German, or Italian city; whilst in Eastern Europe it is

about as easy to procure for yourself a glass of Amontillado or old brown Xeres as to obtain a four-leaved shamrock or the egg of a Cornish chough. Indeed the name is legion of things liked by the average Englishman, articles of his dietary, which he must resign himself to abstain from in one or the other part of the Continent, if his destiny or worldly circumstances compel him to take up his abode upon an alien soil. For instance, when he enters the German or Austro-Hungarian Empire, resolved therein to sojourn, he must bid adieu to the brisk and succulent rabbit, with which delicate rodent, roasted "with a pudding in its belly," as old cookery books prescribe, or sympathetically smothered in creamy onion-sauce, he was wont to regale himself in his sea-girt isle. The indigenous untravelled German lives not who, having slain a rabbit in field or wood, would send it to market for sale, far less eat it himself. The poorest Hausfrau of the Fatherland, to whom meat of any legitimate description—legitimate from her point of view—is an object that she contemplates with eager longing and holy ambition, would turn with loathing and horror from a plump rabbit if it were offered to her at a pfening a pound. Whence this vehement antipathy to rabbit's flesh arises, and what becomes of all the rabbits annually slaughtered in Germany—their skins turn up in tens of thousands at the great yearly Leipzig *Messe*—are questions suggestive of grave economical speculation. A curious culinary problem is presented for solution by the treatment accorded throughout Germany to venison in the course of its preparation for the table. The term venison, as understood in Great Britain, can scarcely be

held accurately to describe the German *rehbraten*, which is the flesh of the roebuck, carefully rid of every particle of fat bestowed upon it by nature, and then as carefully larded with strips of fat bacon, which neutralise its original flavour, and substitute for it that of gamey pork. To the noble fallow haunch, with its rich adipose superstratum that melts in the mouth, as well as to the lordly turtle and seductive sucking pig, the British settler in Germany and Italy must also bid a tender farewell. In the former country, too, he will yearn for roast meat in vain, for Germans bake their joints, poultry, and game, and a spit or a revolving jack will only be found in old-fashioned country houses or in brand-new city hotels, fitted out with every imaginable appliance, ancient and modern, for converting fish, flesh, and fowl into items of a cosmopolitan *menu*. Moreover, his quest for sea-kale, vegetable marrow, and Jerusalem artichokes, will prove vain. The crab is unknown as a comestible to the children of Teut—a curious circumstance, taking into consideration their national predilection for indigestible substances—while he is eagerly devoured, before he arrives at years of discretion, together with all manner of quaint natural phenomena born of the sea, by the inhabitants of the Italian coasts, under the comprehensive designation of "frutto di mare."

We doubt whether the Englishman's inherent propensity for grumbling is not, during his residence abroad, as keenly stimulated by the unaccustomed substances, eatable and drinkable, which he finds himself expected to consume, as by the impossibility of obtaining other articles of nourishment with which he has been agreeably

familiar from the days of his earliest youth. In France the intelligence and solicitude with which the art of cookery is practised speedily reconcile the British palate to an enforced abstinence from its national dishes, and have even been known to stifle the poignant regrets experienced by a true-born Anglo-Saxon when pork-pies and roley-poley puddings surge up in his remembrance. There are, however, few other Continental countries that do not present to the islander objects, avowedly intended to furnish his inner man, which are in the highest degree calculated to amaze and disconcert him. The dietary of provincial Spain teems with compounds appalling to two, if not three, of an Englishman's senses. Beans, seething in questionable oil, and reeking of indubitable garlic, are apt to generate abject consternation in any but a Spanish breast; and few Englishmen can contemplate with impunity a greasy *olla* or a malodorous *puchero*. A long training upon German delicacies is required ere one not to the manner born can bring himself to make a hearty meal off smoked, but otherwise uncooked, breast of goose, fat eels imbedded in sour jelly, and cabbage in an advanced stage of decomposition, washing these stupendous viands down with copious draughts of "white beer," a liquor of paramount mawkishness, the taste and appearance of which suggest that it is mainly composed of soda-water, small cider, and soapsuds. In Russia the ruddy British countenance is liable to be sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought by the malignant influences of *stschchi*, a peculiarly revolting variety of cabbage soup gruesomely enriched with sour cream; nor is *borsch*, an acrid pottage of fish and roe, an

altogether agreeable surprise to a person brought into contact with it for the first time. The Italian *cuisine* is chiefly remarkable for its exhaustive utilisation for human food of members of the animal kingdom which, in less economical countries, enjoy the most perfect and absolute immunity from the claims of spit and stewpan. A fine genial freedom from prejudice characterises the humbler customers of the Roman poulterer, who shocks no native susceptibilities by exposing for sale foxes, hedgehogs, cats, and moles, as well as an infinite variety of birds of prey. It is one of the cheerfullest traditions of the Caffé Greco that Captain Cecil Johnson, a well-known Queen's Messenger and citizen of the world, who some years ago had imprudently accepted an invitation to dine "at home" with a purely Roman family to which he had rendered some kindly service, making after-dinner rendezvous with some English acquaintances for the same evening, was seen by these latter to enter the murky *sala* in which they were awaiting him with a hurried yet faltering step, a pallid cheek, and an agitated mien. Greeted with the friendly interrogation, "Well, Johnson, what sort of a dinner did you get?" he sank down in the nearest vacant chair, groaned deeply, and replied, in a sepulchral voice, "Dinner! Do you call carrion dinner? Upon my faith and honour, as a Christian and a British officer, I have this day been solicited to eat, severally and successively, owl, hawk, and serpent!"

No one who reads the daily papers can have failed of late years to observe that the British tourist who, dreading the fitful humours of the "silver streak," performs

his annual pilgrimage in search of health and recreation strictly within the confines of this sea-girt isle, is moved to ungovernable indignation by the expensive but unappetising fare and audacious "extras" of provincial hostelries, and vents his griefs in angry or plaintive protests, for the most part addressed to the editors of metropolitan newspapers and intended for publication. The minor charges that swell a seaside or lakeside hotel-bill to unnatural proportions are a standing offence to him. By the time he has spent a fortnight in an English sanatorium "service" has blighted his holiday bliss and "candles" have entered into his soul. Of the costly persistence with which these vexatious items figure in his weekly bills he is never weary of complaining. But a still more frequently-recurring affliction is the monotonous and uninteresting character of his daily table d'hôte meals. The table d'hôte system of feeding the tourist is an exotic growth which, imported into this country some years ago from foreign parts, has found here a congenial soil and has flourished exceedingly. It would seem, however, that the spirit of enterprise prompting its introduction exhausted itself in the achievement of that surprising innovation. The national conservatism, which had suffered rude repression through the adoption of Communistic principles into the philosophy of the dinner-table, cropped out vigorously in the cookery purporting to supply that table with superior gastronomical attractions. Radical reform, Continental in origin and levelling in tendency, effected a solid lodgment in the British hotel dining-room; but the Tories of the kitchen stood gallantly by their professional traditions, and, like

the sublimely suicidal Pickwickian crumpet-eater, conclusively proved that they "wouldn't be put out of their way by nobody." Without detracting from its many solid merits and wholesome qualities, it may fairly be said of our English cuisine that it is somewhat lacking in originality of conception and high executive finish. In its adaptation to the diurnal requirements of an ordinary at a fixed price, it has not hitherto exhibited any fascinating variety, but rather a ponderous uniformity, admirably in keeping, it must be admitted, with the prevalent dulness of British holiday resorts. The modern tourist of the upper and middle classes, however, accustomed to changeful and toothsome diet at his club or London restaurant, where he occasionally finds relief from the virtuous plainness of domestic cookery, is inclined to be exacting with respect alike to the composition of his table d'hôte menu and the culinary treatment of its individual items. Unfortunately, the British ordinary, as usually administered in fashionable watering-places and sanatoria, fails to meet his views in either regard; and, if haply he belong to the untravelled category of holiday-makers, he is apt to institute a mental contrast between the tameness and sameness of his native table d'hôte and a succulent and florid foreign ideal, mainly the creation of his own fancy.

Few popular delusions are more intrinsically fallacious than that entertained by the majority of Englishmen unfamiliar with the Continent, that the average table d'hôte abroad teems with triumphs of the culinary art and is, above all, characterised by an agreeably bewildering variety of dishes, one more appetising than the

other. This illusory notion stimulates many an insular lover of good cheer to incur the cost and inconvenience of a foreign trip, only to reap an abundant crop of gastronomic disappointments. Throughout the European mainland, in summer and autumn haunts where tourists most do congregate, table d'hôte dinners, as a rule, are cast in one and the same mould. As uniformly uneventful as the British ordinary, they are even less satisfactory, as far as their capacity for ministering to a healthy appetite is concerned. In first-class foreign hotels, moreover, dinners of this sort are every whit as expensive as they are in English hotels of similar rank. Common to both is a thin, pale soup, supremely genteel and of a curiously mawkish flavour. This nondescript liquor, languidly floating in which may be perceived a few sickly-looking farinaceous tatters, known in commerce by the title of "pâte d'Italie," is the subtle invention of some astute French table d'hôte proprietor, upon whose frugal mind, in the earlier days of the institution, the exquisite expediency of quelling his clients' appetites at the very inception of their repast, flashed with dazzling brilliancy. That so cheap and effective a check upon public hunger should have found an enthusiastic welcome upon every alien shore at the hands of admiring hotel-keepers was no more than might have been expected by their natural enemies of the tourist class. In immediate sequence to the nauseating broth comes a livid fish of unfamiliar species and discouraging aspect, whose utter tastelessness is atoned for by its accompanying sauce, of thick consistence and bilious hue —bright yellow or low-toned green. Another inevitable

accessory of this dismal fish is the never-floury Continental potato, cut into damp cubes—a very deadly viand. Next comes the compact and sodden fricandeau of veal, garnished with a slab pottage of boiled sorrel, turnip-tops, or, in lavishly-administered hotels, real spinach. As an alternative to the fricandeau, a bristling array of mutton-cutlets, displaying a maximum of slender, shiny bone to a minimum of dark and sinewy flesh, is freely handed round. These illfavoured and worse-flavoured delicacies lead up insinuatingly to the "roast," or piece of resistance, consisting invariably of fowls sparsely bedecked with limp watercress, and smitten into several splintery sections by a few sharp blows with a kitchen hand-axe. It is in Germany that this dainty may be enjoyed in its perfection, that is, from a table d'hôte keeper's point of view. The Teutonic chicken is a brittle bird, reluctant while alive to acquire flesh, but unrivalled in the production of osseous substance and wiry tendon. Over-roasted, and prepared with a hatchet for distribution, this remarkable biped may fairly claim to be the German hotel-keeper's best friend, for it is at once cheap, nasty, and uncommonly filling at the price.

It were superfluous to record those incidents of the average Continental ordinary that succeed the spectral and stony fowl, its point of culmination. Subsequent events are rarely of much practical interest, nutritively considered. Any detailed reference to the stock dessert, by which such a repast is appropriately wound up, could not but recall painful remembrances to those whose daily lot it has been, during some sad summer tour through Central Europe, to contemplate the grim mockeries of

fruit, sweetmeats, and pasticceria that follow, hard at heel, upon a course of malodorous cheese and pallid oleomargarine. The "disillusionments" of a typical foreign table d'hôte are many and cumulative. Not the least agonising of them is the ration of wine, too frequently included among their nefarious claims to public support. Anything more distressing to the palate and dolorous to the inner man than the liquid familiar to travelling Englishmen under the equally prohibitive designations of "vin ordinaire" or "vin du pays" cannot be conceived by the most lugubrious imagination. Directly, however, this malignant beverage is foregone for some tolerably drinkable substitute, the boasted cheapness of the table d'hôte dinner vanishes into thin air. All really good wines are no cheaper, if not dearer, in the countries of their growth—that is, when retailed by hotel-keepers—than they are in England. On the whole, it may be confidently assumed that the fresh fish and unassuming roast joint of a British table d'hôte entitle it to preference over the pretentious rubbish served at similar entertainments abroad. Were the attractions of foreign holiday resorts limited to the quality of their ordinaries, few Englishmen, after one melancholy experience, would pay a second visit, at least for pleasure, to German spas or Italian cities famous for their architectural antiquities, galleries of paintings, or picturesque surroundings. It is in the wealth of its recreative resources that the Continent surpasses this country—not in the excellence or variety of its table d'hote dinners.

Perhaps it may not be inopportune to call the average "roving Englishman's" attention to the circumstance,

by him for the most part ignored, that the Rhine is not the only picturesque river attainable by train and navigable by pleasure-steamers; that the Continent is not altogether forlorn of meritorious mountains, other than the Alps and Pyrenees; and that noisome medicinal waters may be imbibed, fresh from Dame Nature's hygeian tap, elsewhere than amongst Bohemian hills or on the slopes of the Taunus. There exist, indeed, many pleasant nooks and corners in Europe, somewhat out of the tourist's beaten track, but by no means difficult to come at, thanks to the extraordinary developments of the Continental railway system that have accrued within the last few years—scenes of wondrous beauty and teeming with historical associations of imperishable interest, which cannot fail to amply reward summer and autumn holiday-travellers for some slight departure from the well-worn grooves traced and deepened for them by successive generations of peripatetic Britons. Family tradition, the force of example, a deeply rooted aversion to small discomforts and—most ineradicable of all—the middle-class Englishman's innate conservatism, which incessantly prompts him to "rather bear the ills he hath than fly to others that he knows not of," deter the majority of Anglo-Saxon tourists, emancipated from professional or business pursuits for six or eight weeks annually, from striking out a new holiday-path for themselves. We are still to a great extent, and often quite unconsciously, bondsmen to precedent and fain to be guided by what we choose to recognise as "good authority"—no less so with respect to our plans for recreation than in our opinions and other more serious

life-matters. Brown junkets on the Rhine because his father did so before him and found it good; Robinson, who pins his faith to Smith, has repeatedly heard from the latter that "Homburg is an awfully jolly place to spend one's vacation in," and to Homburg he goes with unswerving directness; Jones selects Paris as the goal of his holiday expedition, on the general ground that "all the best English people are sure to turn up on the boulevards at some time or other, you know." And so on, through the tale of homely British names that is told at such amazing length in the pages of Kelly—*exceptis excipiendis*, of course. Venturesome originality in the choice of a summer route is not unfrequently displayed by the owners of patronymics reverently recorded by Debrett and Burke; but excursionists of this class, having much more time at their disposal than the ordinary pleasure-seeking toiler, are apt to lash out into trans-oceanic trips, the Continent of Europe not affording them sufficient scope for the gratification of their ambitions in the way of travel. They may be heard of at the Sandwich Islands or the Antipodes—on Western prairies or at Eastern shrines. Their visits gladden Grand Cairo and are the joy of Jeddo—Canada makes much of them, and their advent is annually awaited with absorbing anxiety in the Holy Land.

Somehow or other, it never, or at least very seldom, occurs to these enterprising patricians or millionaires that it might be worth their while to explore the unfamiliar European nooks and corners to which allusion has been made above. To the middle-class British tourist, it is no exaggeration to say that they are abso-

lutely *terræ incognitæ*. An Anglo-Saxon is well-nigh as rare an apparition to the Carpathian populations as a camel or a comet. And yet the Carpathians teem with lovely scenery; their fastnesses are penetrable, on their either slope, by rail, and are moreover, traversed by excellent metalled roads, within a three days' journey from Charing Cross. How many English excursionists cross the Passes of the Red Tower or Dragon during the ruddy autumn-tide, or seek shelter from the fierce summer-heats in the leafy Transylvanian valleys, peopled by four of the comeliest and most picturesque races that Eastern Europe can boast of—the statuesque Rouman, sturdy Saxon, lithe Tsigan, and swart Szekler? How many put in an appearance, from one year's end to another, at Mehadia, or are cognisant of that rock-bound sanatorium's existence? No sweeter spot, no more romantic sojourn, than Mehadia can be found in all the favoured holiday-haunts of Germany, Austria, or Italy. Its waters, too, are sufficiently nasty to content the most curious connoisseur or *difficile* dilettante in loathsome liquids. Taken internally they will—at least, so Dacian doctors say—cure every ill that flesh is heir to. Applied externally, one variety of them will agreeably redden the blackest of hair, and impart a fashionable hue, ardent and uniform, to the flaxen mop of unsophisticated childhood or the silvery locks of wily old age. Socially speaking, the Roumanian element predominates at Mehadia; and no Englishman of cheerful disposition, tolerably emancipated from Dumbledowndeary prejudices, could wish for more agreeable holiday associates than the debonair descendants of Trajan's prætors and centurions,

or of the Phanariote nobles whom Turkey, in past centuries, masterfully grafted upon the ancient Dacian aristocracy. To Mehadia's pleasant annual gatherings Servia contributes the *fine fleur* of Belgradian—in most respects the converse of Belgravian—official and diplomatic circles, whilst Hungary is favourably represented by a sprinkling of magnates from the Banat and Siebenbürgen, excellent sportsmen, skilful players of écarté and tarok, of whose periodical pilgrimages to Carpathian springs hydropathy is the pretext and pastime the purpose. To amateurs of feminine beauty, Mehadia offers exceptional attractions. Roumania and Hungary are veritable nurseries of pretty women, as gracious in manner as they are graceful in form and carriage; and the more massive charms of Servian dames and damsels will be found to bear comparison with those of the Trasteverine, still celebrated throughout Italy for grandeur of shape and justness of proportions. From an artistic point of view, the leading characteristic of these three semi-Oriental races is unquestionably richness of colour, in men and women alike. The latter are endowed in common with luxuriant hair, white and regular teeth, warmly-tinted complexions, and large lustrous eyes. They are delightful companions, altogether untainted by blue-stocking proclivities and refreshingly disdainful of Woman's Emancipation. In the geography of schools they may readily be caught tripping; but their knowledge of every landmark and *accident du terrain* in the Pays de l'Amour is equally accurate and exhaustive. No spot more propitious to the prosecution of this particular branch of study, under amiable and accomplished

teachers, could be selected as the scene of a brief but thrilling holiday romance, than Mehadia.

The Carpathians, which constitute, roughly speaking, four-fifths of the Roumanian frontier, describing a huge irregular curve, from the southern, or Danubian boundary of Lesser Wallachia to the extreme eastern limits of Lower Moldavia, abutting upon Russian territory, abound in picturesque nooks and corners, hitherto unexplored by the British tourist, to whom they offer every imaginable variety of sylvan and mountain scenery. So do the Austrian shores of the blue Adriatic, easily accessible by the comfortable Lloyds' steamers that perform mail and passenger service between Trieste and the Levant with convenient frequency and admirable punctuality, touching at all the points of interest on the Illyrian and Dalmatian coasts between Capo d'Istria and the Bocche di Cattaro. One of the wonders of Europe is to be seen at Pola—a noble Roman amphitheatre, the imposing circle of which is not maimed, like that of the Roman Coliseum, by barbarous inroads upon its material, but rears its massive stone rings on high, storey upon storey, in an extraordinary state of preservation. Austria's magnificent naval arsenal, the pride of Pola harbour, is also well worth a visit. Farther down the coast, stowed away at the very end of a deep bite in the huge Quarnero cliffs, lies Lussinpiccolo, the quaintest of little maritime burghs, inhabited by fishermen and sailors who are also growers of grapes from which a pleasant sharpish wine is made. Tall muscular fellows are the Lussignani—two-languaged men, brave and industrious—Slavs by race, but subjugated of old by

Venice, and skilled in the soft Italian dialect of their victress. Zara, again, is an Adriatic town that will be found to exercise a strange fascination upon lovers of the picturesque. It is stone-walled towards the sea, and bears the stamp of Venetian rule—the Lion of St. Mark—as it were upon its very face, obtrusively and defiantly. To enter it, you must pass through narrow gates, mere slits in its mural masonry, and mount long flights of steps, in some places hewn out of the living rock. Steep streets, paved with huge flagstones, like those of Genoa and the older parts of Florence, lead tortuously upwards to the fashionable part of the town, where reside the magnates of a decadent local aristocracy in grim old *palazzi*, and the great man of the long, straggling, slender province—the Dalmatian Governor-General, a sublime Excellency who, being an Austrian officer, is urbane and kindly to the wandering foreigner properly introduced to his notice. Wonderful streets are those of Zara, with their open-air cafés, awned in from the sun's searching rays, and their bewildering variety of handicrafts, plied with infinite clatter and chatter *sub Jove calido*. But even their manifold attractions must yield the palm in interest to those of the Spalato *vicoli*, which, considered either from the artistic or antiquarian point of view, are unrivalled upon the eastern coast of the Adriatic. Spalato may be said, with but slight exaggeration, to be built of, and into, Diocletian's palace, surely the mightiest, vastest edifice ever erected by an intelligent tyrant to his own self-glorification. This unique city is a sort of architectural hybrid, Venice blent with, or rather welded into, Rome—the ornate and decorative,

simple in form, but complex in treatment, ingeniously accommodated to the grandiose and classical. Lovely Ragusa, too, cowering cosily under the frowning brows of the Herzegovinian mountains, with her fawn-coloured ancient castle and menacing modern hill-forts, her patrician palaces, her noble Stradone, enchanting Boschetto and strange plump attendant island of Lacroma, "very like a whale"—Ragusa of the creamy wall-tints, the dazzling oleanders, the deep blue bay and the broad stone *piazze*, surrounded by admirable specimens of the sterner Venetian architecture, may claim rank as the paragon of "unfrequented nooks" well deserving that a fair summer holiday month, at least, should be spent within her romantic precincts. *Avis aux lecteurs !*

Spa—I mean *the* Spa, of course, the one that owns the sway of the Belgian Lion—during the months of August and September periodically proves itself to be a watering-place in the active as well as passive sense of the word. The picturesque little sanatorium is by its nature a dampish sort of paradise. When the rest of Nature's face cracks all over, even as the surface of an "Old Master," and is become subfusk in hue with sheer feverish dryness, Spa, like Glamorganshire, Killarney, and the Salzkammergut, remains agreeably humid, just steaming a little to show that it is not utterly insensible to solar influence. A moderate shower converts it into a watershed; heavy weather makes it ooze at every pore; and, after a fortnight's rain or so, it becomes so inveterately diluvian that one would scarcely be surprised at encountering a portly plesiosaurus waddling along the Promenade, or at finding the baccarat Institution

exclusively occupied by a speculative gathering of gay young mammoths, punting away with the recklessness of inexperience. What, indeed, should such amphibious innocents know about punts? So uninterruptedly did the rain pelt or dribble during the last of my many sojourns in Spa, and so strong became the impression upon me that I had somehow or other harked back to a tertiary formation in the drenched and sloppy condition presumably characterising it prior to the genesis of præ-historic man, that had I, whilst struggling under a dripping umbrella from the circulating library to the Redoute, collided with a full-grown pterodactyle, I should have contemplated him without astonishment, raised my hat apologetically, and, murmuring "*Pardon, Monsieur Béhémoth!*" pursued my slushy way, regretful but unamazed.

The approaches to Spa are, one and all, charactised by extraordinary picturesqueness—especially that one leading from the German frontier to the cosy little valley in which the tiny township nestles—and as you are dragged by the deliberate Belgian steam-horse through the hilly district intervening between Verviers and Pepinster, the abnormally high standard of popular well-being therein forces itself upon your attention with irresistible attractiveness. The country throughout is thickly peopled; huge factories fill the vales, pretty villas and châteaux fringe the high crests: the proletary is well fed, ruddy, and manifestly prosperous; everybody seems fully occupied, lively, and bent upon "getting along" with whatever he or she has to do. Belgium is a free land, eminently industrial, money-

making, and thrifty. Whilst traversing it one cannot fail to recognise the results accruing to the general condition of a nation from the rule of a liberal, just, and politically unambitious government.

Arrived at Spa, you find one enormous omnibus waiting to convey you to the hotel you may have happened to fix upon as the place of your temporary abode; there is really no competition for you. The conductor of this impartial vehicle is as well disposed towards one hostelry as towards another, the titles of all being painted in letters of gold upon the hinder panels of his gigantic conveyance. It is all one to him whether you alight at the hospitable portals of the "Orange" or the "York;" so he graciously permits you to exercise your *libre arbitre* to the fullest imaginable extent. You take your seat; he closes the door upon you with a slam re-echoed by the surrounding hills, clambers to his lofty perch on the box, and away rattles the ponderous equipage with a noise that would do honour to a battery of horse artillery at the trot. The stones of Spa are as rough as they are hard, which is really saying a good deal for their surface irregularities. Not only the town itself, which is about as large as the Green Park, but its whole immediate neighbourhood, is paved with these intolerable minerals; and, as it would seem that the main purpose of a seasonable visit to Spa is to drive about its streets from dewy morn till misty eve in four-wheeled wickerwork chaises, the total amount of peace and quiet to be obtained there is about equivalent to that which may be enjoyed in a steam-hammer shed adjacent to a riveting-yard, both in full employment.

Spa lies in a narrow green valley, apparently constructed of highly-seasoned sounding-boards ingeniously concealed from human gaze by trees, grass, ferns, and other natural productions of the vegetable persuasion. Every one of the abominable little chaises above alluded to, therefore, elicits whilst in motion a reverberation wholly disproportionate to its visible dimensions; and, about every other hour, the huge railway omnibus, on its way to or from the station, tears through the town with a din compared to which the growlings of a chronic volcano are mere timid lovers' whispers. When the aforesaid chaises are not being galloped about at the top speed of their wiry little horses by reckless English lads or fast young American beauties, they are driven with maddening deliberation up and down the principal street by their respective proprietors in search of an honest penny, or, haply, of a nimble ninepence-halfpenny, the British equivalent of a franc. In that street are situate the Kursaal, all the fashionable shops, and several of the leading hotels. I may here parenthetically remark that the staples of retail trade at Spa are butterfly-brooches, puppy-bust sleeve-links and breast-pins, floral fans, and imitation coral. I do not know but that this protracted torture of the lingering chaises, *à la recherche d'un clientèle*, to the slow agony of which each particular stone contributes its own peculiar resonance, is not harder to bear than the more vehement but less enduring whizz and clatter of the selfsame chaises as they whirl swiftly and impetuously past one's window. Worst of all is the booming crash of the monster omnibus, drawn by dray-horses all behung with clamorous bells that ring an

insane *carillon* as those clumsy quadrupeds pound along the sonorous streets. Whilst this demon locomotive is in motion one may stand close to the Kursaal orchestra, a body of some thirty executants, in full play, and not hear a single note of the piece it is engaged in performing.

Of the Kursaal itself there is but little to say, and that little is by no means to its advantage. It is an abashed, barn-like building, comparing unfavourably with the majority of similar establishments familiar to Continental tourists of the hydropathic variety. But the environs of Spa are really lovely, and court exploration on foot or by means of the legion of pony carriages already mentioned—besides which, Spa can boast of saddle-horses galore, and good ones at the price. I remember securing a fiery steed who could and would jump like a professional steeplechaser, some years ago, when I visited Spa in the suite of the Shah, and keeping up easily with that tawny potentate's famous pink-tailed Arab in a rattling scamper across country executed *all' improvista* by Nasr-ed-deen during a casual afternoon excursion. Every sort of vehicular conveyance is lavishly provided there by private enterprise for the accommodation of visitors. You may even engage a couple of four-in-hands with extra-scratch teams if you be so minded. About four miles from the town are, concealed in a shady forest nook, the mineral springs of Sauvenières, rising from Nature's laboratory to the earth's surface in the garden of an excellent restaurateur, whose Haut Sauterne deserves the highest commendation. The drive to Verviers is also a charming one, quite within the reasonable limits

of a pleasant day's outing. As for the waters of Spa and its vicinity, they are neither more nor less nauseous than those of any other celebrated Bad-Ort. I have tasted them, but no ordinary inducement will ever tempt me to repeat that revolting experiment.

The royal Free-Town of Carlsbad, every summer crowded to excess by a cosmopolitan gathering of real or imaginary valetudinarians, is situate on one of the most malodorous little rivers in Christendom—the Tepl—and, when approached by road from Marienbad, may be said to properly commence at a light suspension bridge spanning that offensive stream between the Alte and Neue Wiesen, two prettily laid out promenades dedicated to the recreation and rest of those whom congested liver, gout, rheumatism and other painful human ailments have condemned to absorb a certain quantity of Dame Nature's vilest brews in the Bohemian headquarters of medicinal waters. Carlsbad, as a town, is not particularly picturesque—a long, straggling collection of green and white houses, built terrace-wise on steepish hillsides flanking the dirty Tepl. The left-hand portion, containing a quaint, old-fashioned market-place and town-hall, is backed, so to speak, by the Hammerberg, Hirschensprung, and Bernhardsfelsen. On the right bank of the river is situate the renowned hot-spring, commonly known by the name of Sprudel, and said to be unique of its kind, which rises from the old bed of the Tepl, at the bases of the Laurenzberg and Buchenberg. Nearly opposite the massive oaken basin through which the Sprudel spouts, gushes, and steams incessantly, day and night, frowns, from the opposite side of the river, the

enormous rock to which, if the pet legend of Carlsbad be founded upon fact, the famous spring in some degree owes the original discovery of its healing virtues. The story is worth narrating; it has the merit of being very old, if not very true.

About the middle of the twelfth century, Kaiser Karl IV., who was passionately addicted to field sports, happened one day to be "a chasing of the wild deer and following of the roe" in the highlands adjacent to the valley of the Tepl. His hounds, a goodly pack, ran a stag of ten to such desperate straits that the hard-beset monarch of the glen leapt from a projecting point of the mountain ridge overhanging the river, down a precipice into the stream itself, some four hundred feet below. He must either have jumped very far out or have found strength to drag his broken limbs some distance from the spot upon which he fell; for the Imperial dogs, which scrambled down the hillside after him, found his body half boiled in a seething spring, and burnt their noses dreadfully in spirited but futile attempts to tackle the carcase. Attracted by their piteous howlings, His Apostolic Majesty hurried down to the already-cooked deer; and, when he saw what had happened to his game, very naturally flew into a terrible passion—for venison boiled (especially in strong mineral water) is venison spoiled. As soon, however, as he had surmounted his first pangs of disappointment and anger, being a monarch who always had a keen eye for the main chance, he began to reflect that the plentiful up-springing of hot fluid from the earth's bowels was a phenomenon of rare occurrence, possibly to be turned to some good and profitable account.

So he ordered his body-surgeon, one Father Bayer, to investigate and report to him upon the nature and attributes of the steaming source. That reverend leech analysed the water according to his lights, and pronounced it to be possessed of extraordinary hygienic properties. Kaiser Karl, happening just then to suffer acutely from an affection of the right hip joint, very pluckily (considering the prejudices and superstitions of the age he lived in) used the Sprudel freely at his doctor's recommendation, and derived such wonderful benefit from it that he ordered a commemorative castle to be built on, and a small town at the foot of, the rock from which the despairing stag had taken a header in the extremity of its fear and anguish. The rock is still called the "Deer's Leap;" but the castle, erected A.D. 1364, has long since crumbled into dust and utterly vanished. Carlsbad, however, remains and is prosperous. Not unmindful of its antlered founder, it has set up the figure of a stag on a natural rock-pillar near the summit of the Hirschensprung, from which one may take in the whole of the town and Tepl valley at a single *colpo d'occhio.* Peter the Great climbed to this lofty point, and his visit is commemorated by a square stone block upon which is engraven a Latin inscription in letters of gold.

The most curious and interesting sight in Carlsbad is unquestionably the Sprudel. Its water, of a pale yellowish colour, literally boils as it issues from the ground. When a short distance off, you cannot distingush the jet itself for the dense cloud of steam gathered around and above it. It will cook anything for you *sur place*, from an egg to an elephant. The height to which the jet usually

rises varies between two and four feet, but you will do wisely not to stand too near it, for every now and anon, as though subject to intermittent spasms of fury, it bursts up, in a thick column of seething liquid, to twice its customary altitude, scattering boiling splashes far over the brink of its oaken basin. It tastes like weak chicken broth into which a bundle of old-fashioned lucifer-matches has been accidentally dropped and left to soak. Amongst other startling properties, it possesses that of petrifaction. Any object immersed in it for a short time will be completely covered by a thin hard coating of a greenish tinge, very pretty to look at, but unpleasant to think of in connection with your mucous membrane. Its capacities in this particular line of business are so powerful that if you chance to fall asleep after "filling up" with Sprudel and before you have digested it, it will turn your inside into stone with a promptitude worthy of a better cause. People whose stomachs have become marble are seldom good for much except interment, after that transformation has accrued to them. Consequently, it behoves persons of somniferous proclivities to be somewhat particular about keeping their eyes open whilst they are going through a treatment of Sprudel, seeing that a casual snooze may result in imparting to them a statuesque character wholly incompatible with the attainment of extreme old age—though not so, from a memorial point of view, with immortality. To awaken from a refreshing nap and find oneself converted into a monument is not altogether an agreeable surprise. Therefore, being partial to forty winks after meals, I have hitherto, when at Carlsbad,

deemed it expedient to abstain from Sprudel with a steadfastness dictated by the holiest instincts of self-preservation.

The Sprudel treatment lasts from four to six weeks, during which period you may not sleep to any appreciable extent, may not eat or drink anything that you like, must get up with the worm and go to bed with the lark, are constrained upon pain of petrifaction to walk about profusely when you would give the world to sit still; and for all this mortification of the flesh and vexation of the spirit, find yourself called upon to expend a sum *per diem* for which, in Paris or Vienna, you could positively wallow in the good things of this life and steep yourself to the bone in mundane pleasures. I forgot to mention that Carlsbad is deadly dull, even to a robust and cheerful human being. That is so, however. Upon invalids it exercises a truly crushing influence. I have seen men of notorious valour, arrived at about the middle period of a Sprudel "Cure," cry like whipped children over the unutterable dismalness of their lot. Remember, such a man must rise at four o'clock of the morning; must not play cards, dance, or indulge in any amusement of an exciting description; must not go to sleep during the day, after his one poor, skimping, mawkish meal, lest he never wake again! Picture to yourself this luckless wretch, robbed nightly of his repose, drenched with thick warm water, half starved, bored to death, and forbidden to nod over his post-prandial cigar under penalty of transmogrification into a mere "monumental mockery" of himself! Health is a paramount blessing; but I am not so certain that it is

not dearly purchased at the price of such ingenious torture as this, to be endured every day and all day for at least a month.

At from five to six A.M. on a sunny summer's morn, the "covered way" leading to the Sprudel spring presents a highly animated spectacle. It is thronged with "Early Christians," hurrying backwards and forwards between their nauseous draughts, every one provided with his or her beaker of Bohemian glass. Most of the gentlemen wear their tumblers attached to a button-hole, after the manner of a decoration. It is easy to tell at a glance, who has drunk, and who has not. On the countenances of persons comprised within the latter category is impressed the settled melancholy of mournful anticipation, whilst the faces of those who have undergone the dread ordeal are distorted with the writhings of miserable retrospection. It is, to my mind, scarcely possible to conceive a more abnormal situation for a person of independent means and civilised habits to find himself placed in than that of drinking boiling water at cock-crow, in the presence of a numerous assembly and to the accompaniment of a stringed band playing the *Brindisi* from *Lucrezia Borgia*—a subtle but irritating musical illustration of the "unfitness of things." True, Orsini's cup was poisoned; but that can scarcely be held a pleasant circumstance of which to be reminded while swallowing Sprudel. At any rate, if I know anything about happiness, *il segreto per esser felice* is not to be routed out of bed before dawn and turned into the open street, breakfastless, to drink eight or nine half-pints of scalding liquid.

Of all the show places in and about Salzburg, Hellbrunn is, if not the most picturesque, splendid, or imposing, decidedly the funniest. And yet this old archiepiscopal Lustschloss, built by one of Salzburg's priest-princes ever so long ago, is marvellously situated, and the approach to it from the town is made through a dream-country of mountains, woods, castles, monasteries, avenues of lofty trees, pretty straggling villages, and richly cultivated fields, across limpid rivulets, skirting tiny lakes, and passing under the very eaves of solid, comfortable-looking farmhouses, flanked by huge elms. To reach the gate of the Schloss, built in the shadow, as it were, of the rugged Untersberg, you turn sharp to the left out of the main road, close by the ancient fish nurseries of which the Salzburgers are so proud; and well they may be, for these breeding-ponds are ample in size, twenty-seven in number, and in every pond is brought up to years of discretion a different sort of fish. On the opposite side of the broad valley towers the mighty Gaisberg, his broad base stretching almost to the foot of the conical Stauffen; some three miles off the fortress of Salzburg, built of a stone so like the rock on which it is perched that it seems to have grown out of the mountain top, rears its grey turrets and long embrasured walls grimly enough skywards. The whole picture is essentially *moyen age*, feudal, Walter Scottish. Unfortunately, it is not peopled with the dashing baron's jovial retainers and pastoral *belles* of romance, but by a very ugly, clumsy, and surly race of peasantry, not in the least tastefully attired: their leading characteristics are four-cornered faces and

circular backs. They neither strew flowers in your path, tender you beakers of beady Rhenish, nor even greet you with a courteous salutation: far from it. They are prosaic blemishes on the face of a poetical district; and so I will say no more about them, but return to Hellbrunn and its comic waterworks, which well deserve description.

The castle itself is a sixteenth-century building of no particular architectural significance, fronted by a good-sized quadrangle, one side of which has been converted into an inn, with stabling and all complete, kept by the *genius loci* or *Brunnenmeister* (well-master). Passing through this hospitable anomaly, a short corridor leads to the castle garden, of which the first outwork is filled with the inevitable round wooden tables indigenous to Austrian soil, each surrounded by its full complement of four deal chairs. Heavily-built females with light hair circulate, bearing trophies of *krügel* and *seidel*, *butterbrod*, and other dainties. Do you think your native Austrian would venture out three miles from a town to inspect the beauties of nature and art unless he were assured of being able to steep himself in beer upon the very spot to be explored? Not he; and it is astonishing to remark how soon foreigners fall into his way! One can hardly fancy a tap of beer in Hampton Court Palace garden, or tea and shrimps on the terrace of Windsor Castle; here such refreshing institutions are part of the attraction to palaces and castles. The Austrian, and his half-brother the Bavarian, cannot get on without *gemüthlichkeit*, for which beer is a synonym. I take some credit to myself for having furnished humanity with a plausible

translation of this word, which has hitherto defied universities, and driven individual professors to deep despair.

As soon as you are fairly within his malty jurisdiction, the *Brunnenmeister* is down upon you with imperious precipitation. "You want to see the water-plays?" Of course you do. What else did you come to Hellbrunn for? Not to drink inferior beer in a garden, I suppose. Some of his satellites are dispatched for keys, whilst others hover round you, waving full mugs in the air. Presently the keys are brought, and the *Brunnenmeister*, ordering you in a dignified tone to leave all meaner things and follow him, leads the way across a wooden bridge into a garden behind the castle, laid out in the prim, formal, old German style. Bearing to the left you are conducted down a broad walk, terminating in a huge stone basin containing Tritons, who exhale water at one another. Turning now sharp to the right you enter a long side path, and along the two sides of this are collected the mechanical marvels of hydrostatic eccentricity with which the ingenious archbishop was wont to delight and surprise the noble guests who were invited (after a sumptuous repast) to stroll with him about his grounds. The first fountain you come to is a very elaborate work indeed; Neptune, in a niche, pours water out of an urn —this water collects in a small reservoir, which it overflows, and is led by two open conduits to the edge of a shelf, that I can only compare to a big marble mantelpiece; where the fire ought to be is another reservoir, and on either side of this a panel picture—of course in water-colours—over which the water, spreading in the

form of a fan, flows; and so perfectly pellucid is the liquid, that at first it is *invisible*. You see the two pictures apparently exposed to the air, and do not notice, till your attention is called to the fact by the autocrat of the place, that they are really shrouded by a watery veil, thin and transparent as the most delicate sheet of crystal.

A little farther on you come to a grotto of the most approved pattern, in the centre of which stands a water nymph, with a golden crown lying at her feet. Concealed in a small corridor, you peep into the kelpie's retreat; suddenly a thin spout of water slowly lifts the crown from the ground, and raises it some ten feet or so. At the same moment slender water-threads spring from the ground, the walls, and the ceiling, converging from all directions to the statue. The path leading to the grotto is also arched with jets, to the ignominious wetting of loiterers outside; and I can picture to myself the fat laugh with which the jovial prelates must have hailed the discomfiture of the victims to this *guet-à-pens*. After your experiences of the grotto, you are prepared for water anywhere and everywhere: the *Brunnenmeister* is a man to be conciliated, for he may turn on floods over you at any moment. Presently you come to a sort of miniature theatre, representing the *Haupt-platz*, or principal square of a small German *Residenz-stadt*. The centre is occupied by the palace, say of the Kurfürst von Pumpenbach-Sapperment, and before its open gate two white-coated, blue-breeched sentinels pace their beat, wheeling round with military precision at the same moment, evidently in a high state of discipline. The square itself is full of life, as are the houses surrounding it: a

cooper is making barrels, a butcher slaughtering an ox with a pole-axe, a carpenter planing away for the dear life; blacksmiths, turners, wheelwrights, cobblers plying their crafts; a dozen bricklayers are building a house, a pastrycook is running frantically about with trays of tarts; a bale of goods is being hauled up to a third storey with a crane out of a cart; and in the midst of all this hubbub a *pifferaro* is compelling a grave brown bear with a terrific red tongue to dance. Out of the palace windows lean high-and-well-born lords and ladies, smoking long pipes and flirting fans; in the attic window ponderous love is being made by a *jäger* to a spruce maid-servant; old gossips stretch their necks out of narrow casements and gesticulate the morning scandal; and an organ, whose sound reveals the fact that it has caught a desperate cold from its motor, performs an unintelligible tune, with neither beginning, middle, nor end, all the while. The whole of this little world, two-hundred-puppet strong, is set in motion and kept alive by the action of water. No wonder the organ is husky and weak.

Let us go a little farther on. Here is Andromeda, chained to her rock and as bare as a robin, the traditional sea-monster swimming round her at no end of a rate, *gourmandise* radiant in every lineament of his expressive countenance. You may swim and glare, my active but ill-favoured friend; not for you is that comely tit-bit. It seems you have reckoned without Perseus, who is, however, hard by, and will pretty soon spoil your appetite. I thought so! Just as the marine anthropophagist settles himself for a bite, Perseus, his shining

falchion and terrible shield displayed, pops out of a hole and deals him a smart chop on the head. Disturbed in his dinner arrangements by this untimely interference, the Kraaken goes in for another swim round, shaking his head in evident disgust; but so sure as he comes back to the point he has made up his fishy mind to for an onslaught on the appetising morsel awaiting his maw, as surely does he get "one for himself" from the watchful Perseus, who never fails to check his greediness at the right moment; and so on for ever. Not to laugh at this thrilling scene would be, I think, impossible. The monster, especially, is the funniest fellow imaginable, and the discontented way he wags his head, looks round, and then starts off again full pelt round the rock after receiving a hearty crack from the dodgy deliverer, is inimitably humorous.

Next we come to a potter in the exercise of his profession; then to a labourer's wife turning the grindstone whilst her husband sharpens his scythe; then to another fountain-fan, this time flowing over nosegays of fresh flowers into a shallow basin, in front of which are two tortoises that have evidently joined issue upon some important question, for they are spitting at each other with devilish malignity; and lastly, to a set of manufactured stalactite caves and Roman ruins, full of stuffed birds that whistle and chirp, sirens and sea serpents that swim, and surprises for the unwary, resulting in a liberal aspersion of those who are not endowed with more eyes than stare from a peacock's tail. It is an exquisite bit of humour, for Germany, to wet somebody through unexpectedly; and the *Brunnenmeister* at Hellbrunn is,

in this respect, a supremely witty fellow. In England he would probably get kicked for his funny ways; here he insures an extra gratuity by asperging his clients. There are many more ingenious devices and fanciful tricks executed by water-power at Hellbrunn than I have space to describe; and I cordially counsel any of my countrymen who may visit the district not to leave Salzburg without visiting the archiepiscopal Lustschloss.

In this "best of all possible worlds" (*teste* Pangloss) may be found a considerable number of eccentric and highly enterprising persons who deem that it is their peculiar province in life to deal with the extremes of things. They are not tamely to be contented with mere average good and bad, big and little, strong and weak; what they yearn for, and display remarkable ardour and perseverance in attaining, must be of the best and worst, the largest and smallest, the strongest and weakest. The very gist and flower of such men's existences—I say men advisedly, believing the members of the more redoubtable sex to be, as a whole, averse to extremes, the exception to that rule obtaining in the matter of their personal likes and dislikes—are to have known the tallest giant and most diminutive dwarf, to have descended into the deepest coal-pit or climbed to the topmost peak of Dhavalaghiri, to have drunk more grog than Mynheer van Dunck and eaten more oysters than Dando, to have witnessed the most tremendous conflagration and to have shared the horrors of the most harrowing shipwreck that have appalled humanity within the memory of their contemporaries. The temper of mind with which persons of this sort are naturally gifted

is one that tends disagreeably to limit the number of keen and perfect gratifications they are susceptible of experiencing; for the very "biggest things" (to borrow an Americanism), whether objects or events, are necessarily few and difficult of access. But I am emboldened to believe that I am in a position to augment the opportunities of satisfying that craving for the unsurpassable which possesses the persons in question by at least one solid, indisputable unit. Darmstadt is the dullest capital —probably the dullest city—in Europe. I should be loth to do it an injustice; but having gone through several exceptionally harassing courses of dull towns during two decades of wanderings, I have acquired a dismally accurate appreciation of the different degrees of urban dullness, and must conscientiously award the palm (the sprig of yew would be more appropriate) to Darmstadt's achievement in that respect, which has lodged the Hessian Hauptstadt, so to speak, at the very bottom of that deeper depth which an imaginative but somewhat befogged bard has referred to as situate beneath the deepest depth of all. I had thought until now that Stargard in Pomerania, Gray in the Franche-Comté, Pignerol in Piedmont, and a few other provincial towns with which destiny has made me acquaint, were, on the whole, dullish; but I am come to the conviction, after all those dire experiences of tiresome towns, that, compared with Darmstadt, they are giddily gay—nay, desperately dissipated. The expression "played out" is applicable to Darmstadt with exquisite felicitousness. You may walk at high noon from one end to the other of the long, broad,

melancholy street of which it chiefly consists, having laid yourself long odds that you will not meet seven people of both sexes and all ages, and win by an old woman and a boy. In making this bet it is not necessary to hedge a single living soul. You are sure to win. Short of a revolution—the event of all others least likely to come off in Darmstadt—I can conceive no emergency that would bring more than five people together in the chief street of this city; and the unwonted spectacle of a public aggregation, even to that number, would doubtless denote that popular excitement was raging to an extent calling for prompt action on the part of the military authorities. The guide-books assert that there are some thirty odd thousand Darmstädters. I should have set the population down at about three dozen and a half from what I saw of it. Those amongst them with whom I conversed, to their manifest disinclination, exhibited a want of vital interest in anything and everything, including their own institutions, that was little short of phenomenal. The landlord of my hotel, which stands close to the palace, "did not know" when interrogated as to whether the Grand Ducal family was in town or in the country. Upon inquiring of the Under-Deputy-Vice-Castellan of the Schloss itself where the Duke of Edinburgh had been lodged recently, that illustrious functionary was terribly gravelled and perplexed; nor did an explanatory reference to his Royal Highness as "the English Prince" in the least relieve him from his embarrassment. It was too evident that he knew not of the august sailor's existence. He was dimly conscious of the facts that the Czar and Czarina

had been visiting the "Hohe Herrschaft," and that the Czar "had gone somewhere to a review," but of Prince Alfred he was nervously unconscious. It took me the best part of the afternoon to find out the address of the British chargé d'affaires; and he did not live there after all! There is a gloomy carelessness about the Darmstädter that partly results from the annihilating dullness of their town, and is in no small degree, I should fancy, ascribable to the monument on the Schlossplatz. This peculiarly depressing public work is very long and very red—a dull red, though, in strict keeping with the mental tone of the population. On one side of its square base is engraved in enormous letters the word "Ludwig." Upon the casual contemplator the effect produced by that baptismal name, forlorn of all explanatory comment or device, and evidently intended to carry conviction to the most sceptical mind, is the reverse of exhilarating. What must it be upon the perennial inhabitant! Who was, or is, Ludwig, and why has he been thus branded, dateless and unglossaried, upon a column with the hideousness of which even London monuments cannot vie? Surely an ungenerous advantage to take of any Ludwig, living or dead! Is this dismal red pillar, perhaps, to be taken as the concrete expression of the Darmstädter's intellectual conception of an abstract Ludwig? There is a lack of inventive force about it that leads me to think so. This particular deficiency is betrayed, though, in quite another direction, by the course adopted by the Darmstädters in dealing with the question of naming their streets. When I visited their city, they were

slowly and sadly completing a new street, as malodorous, by the way, as though it were of the most undoubted antiquity. It seems that they had already possessed, for many years, a William Street. Other names, one would imagine, were open to them; but they were not able to soar above William. However, to avoid the confusion to which a synonym pure and utter might have led, they, in the exercise of a sombre prudence, named the new thoroughfare "Improved William Street." Volumes could not reveal more respecting the hopeless immobility of the Darmstadt nature than this simple record.

The chief mystery of this amazingly lugubrious town to one who knows how Germans of all ranks delight in listening to music, even if badly performed, as they sit in the open air during the crepuscular hours, drinking beer and smoking what they are pleased to call tobacco, is that there are absolutely no places of public resort in Darmstadt where that mildest of recreations may be indulged in. During my second evening there—my last, despite the dictum of the proverb declaring that "Alle guten Dinger sind drei"—my inquiries for the customary "Biergarten mit Concert" were uniformly fruitless. "Evening relaxations! those have we not, gracious sir; one amuses oneself not in Darmstadt, neither of day, nor of evening. We are a quiet, with-few-pleasures-and-little-excitement-contented people." Such was the reply given by a member of the Hessian Parliament to the faltering demand for some sort of after-dark pastime preferred to him by an Englishman fresh from the brilliant gaieties of a London season, who

felt as if, by the workings of some dread cataclysm, he had suddenly been projected into another planet. The very quietest place, I assure you. All ye who long for absolute peace—*mutato nomine*, unmitigated boredom—go to Darmstadt!

I cannot resist the temptation of closing this sketch by a strictly authentic anecdote, having relation to an official personage upon whom I had occasion to call. I should mention that I found this gentleman—a foreign diplomatist, well-known in Paris and the East, and once of a remarkably cheerful disposition—pacing his rooms in a demented manner, and counting from one to a hundred in a low and hollow voice. "Do not be alarmed, my friend," he exclaimed, noticing the air of surprise with which I contemplated him; "I am only confirming myself in my system. Having nothing to do, either in the way of business or amusement, in Darmstadt, I have been driven to theorise. Observation, protracted over many hours daily, from my window, has convinced me that every object, animate or inanimate, passing my house, may be prophetically determined by a particular number to be recited aloud, always commencing at and counting forward from one. I have classified these things. Thus, dog in my system is represented by the number nine; old woman with basket by forty-seven; boy with his hat in his hand by the number twenty-nine, and so on *ad infinitum*. Intelligent English traveller, you will observe," pointing out an entry in a huge manuscript volume, "stand at the high figure of 94,608, but I seldom have the patience to count up to him. This is my only occupation. You will scarcely believe me when I

tell you that I sometimes find it a trifle wearisome. But one must do something. Come to the window and hear me exorcise the dog, and the old woman with the basket, at least. They are easy ones and short." And, leading me to the casement, he commenced in sepulchral accents, "One, two, three, four," &c. To such a pass had a few months' residence in Darmstadt brought a noble intellect and cheery spirit.

I left my unfortunate friend to "dree his weird" (whatever that may mean), despite his urgent request that I would stay and hear him numerically produce Hessian soldier (thirty-six) and public conveyance (one hundred and twenty-two). Poor Hubert Jerningham! his state was not a gracious one. Luckily for him, the Foreign Office—soon after my brief sojourn in Darmstadt—translated the wasted remnant of a good fellow and *joyeux compagnon*, that had been miserably counting itself into a premature lunatic asylum under the awful presence of Darmstadt dulness, to other climes.

CHAPTER XII.

STATES OF SIEGE.

Amongst the most startling and least agreeable experiences of an Englishman abroad are those which accrue to him in the course of his sojourn in cities which happen to be in a state of siege; a condition of urban affairs which has been of late years by no means infrequent in Continental capitals. The words "state of siege" have a somewhat formidable sound; and, indeed, they indicate an abnormal condition of affairs in the city to which they happen to be applied that is scarcely consistent with absolute safety to the lives and property of its inhabitants. Circumstances have thrown me in the way of "states of siege," either inside or outside the cities temporarily submitted to them, with somewhat more frequency than falls to the lot of average roving humanity; and having in no less than three of these quaint experiences narrowly escaped losing my life without having committed any action in the least calculated to draw down upon my luckless head the displeasure of the legitimate authorities for the time being, I am prepared to assert in the most positive manner that a "state of siege" is one of the most unpleasant "states" imaginable in which a person of irreproachable conduct

but an inquiring disposition may find himself called upon to abide.

It was during such a "state," at Bucharest, the "City of Pleasure," during the reign of John Alexander Cusa, that, whilst walking quietly down the Strada Herestreu, I underwent the startling sensation of being shot at, at something less than point blank range, by two Wallachian soldiers, who were, fortunately for me, too drunk to take aim or hold their rifles steady. In Vienna (July, 1866) I was arrested whilst visiting the *tête du pont* at Floridsdorf with the Archduke Albrecht's express permisson, and all but shot "on sight," because the warriors into whose hands I fell decided, in their great wisdom, that the papers of legitimation with which I was provided were signed by far too high a military authority not to be forgeries; so that the very excellence and unimpeachability of my right to be where I was at the time of my arrest nearly proved fatal to me! During the state of siege in Rome (1867), being seated at the window of my hotel in the Corso with two friends, a Piedmontese and a German, smoking the after-dinner cigarette in a tranquil and even cheerful spirit, I was favoured by some Papal Carabineers with a discharge of bullets from the opposite side of the street, which smashed three of the panes and made great havoc amongst the lustres of a handsome chandelier that adorned my sitting-room. My friends and myself fortunately escaped with no graver injuries than a few scratches from the broken glass, for the defenders of the Holy See had fired high; but about fifty pounds' worth of damage was done to the

landlord's crystal and to his beautiful painted ceiling, in which the erring bullets terminated their wild career. A year later I was summoned to Madrid, and found that breezy capital *en plein état de siège*, which lasted for about three weeks after my arrival there, but caused me no personal inconvenience to speak of after I had accustomed myself to the humorous promiscuousness with which the Volontarios de la Libertad were wont to let off their muskets in the street in the pursuit of their patriotic avocations.

The next capital in which I had the good fortune to reside during the prevalence of a state of siege was Belgrade. It is not a nice place to live in at any time—far from it; but I have never known it so nasty as it was throughout the autumn of 1876. The hotels and restaurants (the latter word is by no means applicable in its strict sense to the dingy dens in which substances uneatable and liquids undrinkable were grudgingly served out at exorbitant prices) were crowded with rowdy Russians chronically drunk and riotous; its streets were plunged in total darkness after nine P.M., and patrolled by half-savage "civic guards" (the army being away on the Turkish frontier) who surrounded the harmless pedestrian, returning to his inn from a consular party or a visit to the English hakims at the Catherine Hospital, with fixed bayonets, levelled at his vitals first, and challenged him afterwards. An evening stroll along the Terazia, or from the Kalemeydan down to the riverside, proved almost invariably rife with emotional incident; no respectable man's life was safe from the Russian volunteers and the Servian patriots.

Of the two I preferred the latter, with whom I had many encounters, and whose fierceness always struck me as being rather assumed than real—put on, in fact, as a disguise to their natural timidity. Besides, they were always sober, and therefore capable of understanding what was said to them, which the Russians scarcely ever were.

And in the autumn of 1878 I was again, for the sixth time, the denizen of a city in a "state of siege." The executive authorities, to whom such elastic powers were given by the Repressive Bill, published a set of ordinances which placed Berlin in *Belagerungszustand*, and gave the inhabitants of the German capital a sample of the vigour with which they proposed to enforce the measures in question, by sending thence some forty Social Democratic notabilities, including two members of the Imperial Parliament, who were conveyed away from their residences a few hours after the publication of the ordinances in the *Reichsanzciger*, escorted by police-officers, to the several railway stations chosen by them as the starting-points of their exodus, and dispatched, under surveillance, to destinations outside the *rayon* described in the official decree. A state of siege may be defined as being of two distinct sorts or classes, to which, again, infinite *nuances* of application or enforcement are appurtenant. The two sorts are the so-called "great" and "little" states of siege. The former comprehends the suspension of the constitutional and civic laws, the transfer of all administrative power from the civil to the military authorities, the suppression of the press, and the prohibition of

assemblages in the streets of more than three persons together. This is the variety of this institution which I had the pleasure of seeing carried out to perfection in Rome during the autumn of 1867. Shutters and *jalousies* of all the houses had to be closed at six P.M., after which hour no private individual was permitted to take his walks abroad without a special pass from the commandant of the city, and did most wisely, even if he were provided with such a document, to stop at home; for the main streets were held at intervals of five to six hundred yards by pickets of soldiery, whose orders must have been something very like "First fire, then inquire;" for I saw them on more than one occasion shoot down pedestrians who happened to drift into the Corso from the side streets without giving them a minute's law wherein to justify their appearance *sub cælo*. For days and days the streets of the Eternal City were empty of aught but Papal linesmen, Zouaves, and Carabinieri; the inhabitants were so thoroughly cowed that they did not venture out even during the permitted hours, from six A.M. to six P.M.; and the overwhelming stillness of the nights was only broken by sounds of an exclusively military character. The civil population appeared to have vanished altogether. It was a gruesome and wearing time—a state of siege with a vengeance! If a house was suspected of containing any Garibaldian sympathiser or disaffected person, the soldiers fired at it from the opposite side of the way until it was pitted all over with bullet-holes, then broke down the door, and shot or bayoneted every living thing in the building from cellar to attic. I remember that in one house of the Traste-

vere they slaughtered a pregnant woman, a little boy four years old, and a splendid Persian cat, as well as all the men who were found in different parts of the tenement, which was a sort of Casa d'Alloggio for artisans.

The other sort, or "little state of siege," is what we underwent at Berlin, in one of its mildest phases. It can scarcely be said to have affected the population in general at all, nor did it induce the least change in the aspect of the city by day and by night. It consisted mainly in a prohibition from carrying arms, and in the faculty of the authorities to expel from the town and its neighbourhood such persons as they might deem likely to create a disturbance, or to commit seditious actions. Respectable and well-behaved people had nothing to fear from the enforcement of such measures as these; and, but for the lack of confidence in the loyalty of the inhabitants implied by the issuing of the proclamation just a few days before the date appointed for the Emperor's return to his capital, I feel convinced that the majority of the Berliners would have approved of the new ordinances in the most unqualified manner. People there regarded every gun and pistol that was seized by the police—who knew well enough in what quarters to look for them—as one possibility the less of another attack upon their Emperor's life; and the exmission of Socialistic demagogues, far from being deprecated as an extreme measure, was welcomed with a strong and lively sense of relief by the upper and middle-classes, who had for weeks felt as if they were sitting on gunpowder barrels with the heads off, and were unfeignedly grateful to the Government for getting rid of people whom they

looked upon as political lucifer matches. As a matter of fact, the "Kleiner Belagerungszustand," established in Berlin towards the end of the year 1878, and there kept in force until the present day, has worked well and proved a blessing, instead of a curse, to the respectable and order-loving citizens of the German capital. Under its salutary provisions the chief elements of danger to the commonweal have been carefully and exhaustively eliminated; and the life of the venerable German Emperor, twice menaced by murderous disciples of the Social-Democratic dogma, has been happily prolonged to a patriarchal age. Of what value that honoured life has been, and is, to the peace of Europe, statesmen of every civilised country well know. Its preservation throughout the past eight years is in great measure due, I do not hesitate to say, to a "State of Siege."

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